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New York

President: Ms. Al-Khalifa ..... (Bahrain)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (*continued*)

Agenda item 55 (*continued*)

Globalization and interdependence

(b) International migration and development

Report of the Secretary-General (A/60/871)

Note by the President of the General Assembly (A/61/187)

The President: The General Assembly, pursuant to resolution 60/227 of 23 December 2005, will continue the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development.

I now give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Mr. Popane Lebesa, Minister for Public Works and Transport of Lesotho.

Mr. Lebesa (Lesotho): Never before has the issue of international migration been so important as it has been in this new millennium. The Kingdom of Lesotho therefore congratulates the Secretary-General on convening this special meeting.

It is an undisputable fact that international migration involves both very positive impacts and very overwhelming challenges. Issues of human trafficking, human smuggling and acts of terrorism under the guise of migration are some of the challenges bedevilling the phenomenon of international migration. However, issues of international cooperation and regional integration of States, improved migration infrastructure and the globalization drive have also reduced the impact of the negative issues on migration. All these efforts should be channelled towards the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and the strengthening and implementation of Member States' poverty reduction strategies. My country's position is that the international community's commitment and cooperation is needed more than ever before.

I wish to submit a few recommendations to the High-level Dialogue for consideration. First, international migration affects national and regional development strategies and policies, and the disparities that exist between the movement of capital, goods, information and the movement of persons must be addressed in a manner that increases global economic efficiency, reduces unemployment in some sectors in countries of origin and promotes technology transfer, investment and venture capital. Secondly, effective policies and practices must be put in place to address irregular migration, which includes the trafficking and smuggling of persons. The protection of the human rights of migrants and their families, as enunciated in the conventions of the United Nations and the International Labour Organization, is a central component of comprehensive and balanced migration management practices.

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Thirdly, there is solid evidence that migration of citizens from one country to another has, in many instances, assisted in improving the economic outlook for one or both countries. The Kingdom of Lesotho has been and continues to be one of the main suppliers of migrant labour to the neighbouring Republic of South Africa. That has earned Lesotho huge economic benefits in the form of remittances that have been repatriated.

The importance of remittances to many households and economies should be recognized. However, remittances in general, should not be seen as a substitute for foreign direct investment, trade, overseas development assistance and debt relief. Policies should be developed to assist remitters and their households by lowering the cost of remitting, removing restrictions on the transfer of funds and improving the level of investment and the productive use of remittances. A professor once remarked that as long as the trends of globalization and technology retain their current dynamic, the issue of migration with its concepts of "brain drain", "brain gain" and "brain sharing" will remain with us for a long time.

Regional consultative processes such as the Migration Dialogue for Southern Africa are crucial for fostering dialogue, mutual understanding and concerted effort among stakeholders with regard to migration challenges. This High-level Dialogue is urged to recognize their value and to encourage cooperation among them.

Managing migration is a very daunting task for any country. That is complicated by the need for a country to ensure that those who enter its borders are desirable members of our international community, not criminals or perpetrators of terrorist acts. That requires both stern and accommodating migration laws: the legislation should be very harsh to those who have evil intentions when entering a country, while it should facilitate protection for those with noble and acceptable intentions and freedom for them to stay in the country. The balance is delicate and needs the cooperation and continued dialogue of the international community.

The President: Before I give the floor to the next speaker, I have an announcement. As members are aware, the General Assembly heard 20 speakers this morning, and we still have 127 speakers remaining for the High-level Dialogue.

In this connection, there is no alternative but for the Assembly to continue the meeting until 9 p.m. I would like once again to appeal to Member States to limit their statements to four minutes so that we can exhaust the list of speakers at a reasonable hour tomorrow evening. I hope that I can count on the cooperation of representatives to keep to the time limit.

I give the floor to Her Excellency Senator Amanda Vanstone, Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs of Australia.

Ms. Vanstone (Australia): The challenge for States is now best to govern flows of people in a way that achieves the greatest benefit for all the parties concerned — sending and receiving States and migrants themselves.

Australia's entire social and economic fabric and success have been built upon migration. Over the past decade alone, we have welcomed nearly 1 million people as permanent settlers. Almost 25 per cent of our population was born outside our country.

We are pleased to have been recognized by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development as an immigration country par excellence.

That experience convinces us that well-managed migration is the best way of ensuring that the process of migration results in the greatest benefits for all concerned and, importantly, of reducing many of the tragic abuses now associated with irregular migration.

Carefully managed legal migration is the best way to protect both the legitimate interests of States and the human rights of migrants. In this way, the scope for the exploitation of migrants by people-smugglers, traffickers and unscrupulous employers is vastly diminished.

The Australian experience also convinces us that well- designed national migration policies backed by effective administrative capacity will do the most to open up opportunities for nation-building and development. Migration policies based on labour market research and analysis, wide consultation with stakeholders and follow-up evaluation ensure that migration is successfully geared to the needs and capacities of a State.

By fostering orderly humanitarian migration, we have been able to make a commitment to seek out those most in need and to maintain a resettlement

programme, with generous post-arrival help in all those things required to establish a new life in another country, supported by whole-of-Government funding of about $2 billion every four years. These policies will greatly contribute to a positive experience for individual migrants by ensuring respect and facilitating self-sufficiency and willing participation in our society. The development challenges and benefits flowing from return migration, the recirculation of skills, remittances and diaspora-related investment have all been well documented. Development plans and strategies would clearly benefit from much stronger linkages with the effective management of migration.

The contribution that migration can make to the achievement of development goals is not possible without effective administrative capacity to deliver. We believe that the International Organization for Migration (IOM), with its tremendous experience in migration matters and its worldwide reach, is ideally placed to be the prime vehicle for worldwide capacity-building. In our own region, some States have strong capacities and others do not.

We work with partner countries in the Asia-Pacific region to help build capacity so that we and our partners can reap the benefits of orderly migration and curb the abuses associated with irregular migration.

The very nature of international migration requires cooperation among States. We are a long-term participant in dialogue and cooperation bilaterally, in regional consultative processes and at the global level. We believe that the best way to promote understanding and cooperation on migration is by focusing on shared goals and practical cooperative activities.

At the global level, we participate actively in the high-quality annual dialogue on migration policy sponsored by the IOM. We have been closely involved in best-practice forums such as the Berne Initiative. In our own region, we participate in a range of consultative processes. Australia believes that these processes, and similar regional processes in other parts of the world, form the most effective building blocks for international dialogue and cooperation. We know they work.

Future international dialogue on migration is likely to be most effective if it is built on these existing regional processes. They reflect the shared interests of States and utilize the expertise of bodies such as the IOM.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Nicholas Goche, Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare of Zimbabwe.

Mr. Goche (Zimbabwe): Allow me to congratulate you, Madam, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session and to express my confidence that this High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development will have a fruitful outcome under your able stewardship. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the subject under discussion today.

It is indeed a welcome development that the international community has awakened to the importance of international migration, not only as it relates to the globalization process but also as it affects development in both countries of origin and countries of destination. The phenomenon of international migration presents opportunities and challenges when examined in terms of development. It is therefore our hope that this Dialogue will assist us in our collective efforts to map out concrete and practical strategies to turn international migration into a developmental tool that is beneficial to all, in particular developing countries.

The perceived beaefits of international migration to developing countries should not be limited to remittances alone. While remittances can go a long way towards improving the livelihoods of the recipient families, they do not constitute a financial resource upon which long-term development strategies can be based. Moreover, remittances do not compensate for the loss of much-needed skilled and professional personnel whom developing countries lose almost daily to developed countries.

Zimbabwe, like many developing countries, invests heavily in the education and training of its personnel. However, a study done in 2005 shows that the country had lost 60 per cent of its State-registered nurses and half of its medical doctors. Such a massive loss of skilled personnel, arising in part from the aggressive recruitment methods employed by agencies and public and private organizations in developed countries, calls for a more systematic approach to addressing this problem at the global level, at the core of which should be mechanisms whereby developed countries compensate developing countries.

For our part, we, as developing countries, should put in place policies and take measures that allow us to benefit in terms of development from the phenomenon of migration. Such measures, which should also target our citizens abroad, should include reducing the cost of remittances, creating development funds to which non-residents can contribute and encouraging non-residents to invest in designated sectors of the economy through appropriate measures to facilitate such investments.

The other side of migration is the one that relates to irregular and undocumented migrants involved in illegal border crossing or "border jumping", as it is known in our region. These migrants constitute a group that is more vulnerable to all kinds of exploitation and human rights abuses, and they form the bulk of economic refugees. It is, therefore, vital that measures be put in place to ensure their protection and humane treatment. Bilateral and multilateral initiatives are needed to ensure better treatment of these migrants. Alongside such efforts should be measures to address the problem of xenophobia through public awareness. Indeed, xenophobic tendencies have become one of the biggest challenges of our time.

The Zimbabwe Government is currently working with UNICEF, the International Organization for Migration and the International Labour Organization to provide humanitarian assistance to irregular migrants who face deportation from neighbouring countries. This initiative, which the Government of Zimbabwe appreciates, is one example of the role that the United Nations system and other international organizations can play in assisting those who find themselves away from home and in difficult circumstances.

Let me conclude by pointing out that, to the extent that migration is the unfinished business of globalization, Zimbabwe will continue to encourage global dialogue on migration. Our considered view is that only internationally agreed strategies and programmes will address the challenges posed by international migration and maximize the opportunities for development that it presents for the benefit of all.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdulla Ali Mohd Al-Kaabi, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of the United Arab Emirates.

Mr. Al-Kaabi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish at the outset, on behalf of my delegation, to congratulate you, Madam, and your country on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session. Our delegation also expresses its deepest appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Jan Eliasson, for his efforts in guiding the work of the General Assembly during the sixtieth session. Our appreciation goes also to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his tireless efforts and for his comprehensive reports on the various aspects of international migration and development. We also align ourselves with the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

International migration is a phenomenon that is as old as the human need to search for livelihood and security. If thoughtfully regulated and invested in, it could play a key role in constructive cooperation among the world's nations in the areas of human assistance, the exchange of economic benefits and the building of bridges of cultural tolerance among peoples and States. This would help promote sustainable development programmes, especially in developing countries, and would bolster good relations and strengthen efforts aimed at maintaining international peace and security.

Since its establishment, the United Arab Emirates has recognized the importance of economic and cultural cooperation between friendly and fraternal countries; this carries with it economic and social benefits and gains for all parties. Since oil began to flow in our country, the State has opted to import foreign labour to help build the infrastructure necessary for laying the foundations of a modern State and advancing its institutions in order to achieve sustainable development and prosperity for its citizens.

At the same time, it established a partnership with labour-exporting countries, especially developing ones, to help vitalize their economies and implement development programmes in those countries. It is estimated that external remittances amount to $22 billion annually. Expatriate labour represents about 90 per cent of the total workforce in the United Arab Emirates.

In the light of these statistics and their economic implications, and to protect the special characteristics of Emirate society in the face of the cultural and social impact of values and norms brought into the country by expatriate labour, which could influence the social fabric and demographic make-up of the country, as

well as for other sensitive reasons, the United Arab Emirates has enacted a set of laws and regulations ensuring that guest workers in the country are temporary, not permanent, immigrants. These workers do not emigrate to live permanently in the United Arab Emirates; rather, they come on temporary work contracts to perform specific jobs, after which they return home. These arrangements are made according to mechanisms and procedures agreed upon by countries exporting and importing labour and have been endorsed by the International Migration Organization. This arrangement has had positive outcomes and has yielded fruitful results for the economies of both parties.

Acting from its convictions and in line with a policy based on principles of cooperation and respect for human beings and for cultural and religious diversity, the United Arab Emirates provides expatriates with a friendly and tolerant social environment that meets their social and human needs. Believing in the important role that expatriate labour plays in stimulating the economy, the State has enacted laws and regulations to regulate the entry, residence and work of foreign workers and to ensure that their rights are protected in accordance with national laws and international treaties on labour, workers and human rights. The United Arab Emirates has ratified nine international treaties in this sphere.

One of the most important rules was the law promulgated last year by our head of State, His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, regulating the use of children in camel racing. It prohibits using children of either sex, under the age of 18, in any form of camel racing and subjects violators to severe penalties. Another new measure was adopted in July 2006, requiring that construction companies allow a two-and-a-half-hour midday break for labourers who work under the sun during the months of July and August, when the temperature rises to very high levels.

In conclusion, we hope that our dialogue will achieve its desired goal of leading our countries towards progress, prosperity and sustainable development.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. E. Ahamed, Minister of State for External Affairs of India.

Mr. Ahamed (India): Madam President, let me join my colleagues in extending to you our heartfelt felicitations on your election.

International migration is a subject of much global interest at present. It involves people and has differing impacts on sending, receiving and transit countries, including on their economies and their societies. I am, therefore, glad that international migration is being discussed at the United Nations. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his detailed report (A/60/871), as well as for the events organized as part of the preparatory process for this High-level Dialogue.

India is a major country of origin, destination and transit of migrants, with a long history of attracting people and of sending people to other lands. It is estimated that around 20 million people of Indian origin live in other countries, while another 20 million migrants, including a large number of irregular migrants, are in India today. Overseas Indians, by dint of sheer effort, very often in trying circumstances, have significantly contributed to the countries of their destination, while at the same time playing a positive role in building a bridge with India. Recognizing this, every year we celebrate their achievement with a Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, or Day of the Indian Migrant, and have taken several innovative investment and policy initiatives including the overseas citizenship of India programme.

In the context of globalization there is a need to recognize the inevitability of international migration. That presents challenges and opportunities, including the increased demand for specialists in developed countries to strengthen their international competitiveness. In fact, the World Bank's *Global Economic Prospects 2006* notes that a rise in migration from developing countries raises incomes of natives in high-income countries. The developed countries would therefore benefit from a greater openness than hitherto in allowing movement of natural persons across national frontiers and from greater political will and determination for a successful conclusion of the GATS Mode 4 negotiations.

High-income countries must address the legitimate needs of migrants, including a refund of their pension benefits and social security contributions, especially in cases of migrations of shorter duration. The lack of appropriate or matching structures in the

country of origin should not be made an excuse for the denial of a migrant's legitimate pension benefits. Efforts, especially in the case of short duration migrants, also need to be made to reduce the cost of remittances.

Coming from Kerala, one of the largest places of origin of many of our workers overseas, I can personally testify to the importance of remittances. They are often the most important source of livelihood for the families of the migrant workers, and support not just one, but many persons.

There are no restrictions in India on migrating overseas. We favour a regular, non-discriminatory and orderly process, whether for permanent or short-term migration. In this context, artificial barriers to migration by high-income countries should not be created. Receiving, as well as sending countries, should act to reinforce the positive impacts of from migration and work together in a cooperative atmosphere, while being sensitive to each other's concerns.

We also believe that countries of origin benefit from the return of migrants with skills or capital that they would not have acquired at home. The existence of reliable domestic institutions encourages the involvement of migrants in the development of their countries of origin. Brain drain, as a result of the migration of skilled and highly trained people, can also be translated into an overall gain.

As we speak about international migration today, we also need to note the problematic facet of irregular migration, which is a cause of concern for our collective well-being. Moreover, there are serious security implications, including the use of irregular migrants as an instrument for cross-border terrorism and for creating social tension in the host country. This needs to be tackled with a firm resolve. It is no longer the concern only of domestic law enforcement, but is a matter of global priority requiring a coordinated and a concerted action. A similar firm resolve is required to tackle the scourge of people-smuggling and trafficking, especially of women and children.

Cooperative international efforts should result in comprehensive, mutually beneficial solutions that are based on the best practices dealing with international migration. We recognize that international migration solutions and approaches relevant to a particular country or region may not be appropriate for others. Our efforts should focus on promoting teamwork among nations and maximizing the benefits of international migration while reducing its negative effects. We also believe that regular interaction among countries, including at the United Nations, could result in a win-win situation for all.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I call upon Mrs. Aisha Abdel Hady, Minister of Manpower and Migration of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

Mrs. Hady (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish to express my gratitude and deep appreciation to the Secretary-General and staff of the United Nations for their endless effort in support of the general membership of the Organization and their work towards achieving the internationally agreed development goals. This Dialogue offers a very important opportunity to debate the relationship between migration and development in all its dimensions, in the hope that we can, through this constructive dialogue, establish practical mechanisms and methods that maximize the benefits of migration and minimize its negative impact.

Undoubtedly, international migration, if well managed, can contribute positively to countries of origin and countries of destination in every way — economically, socially, politically, and culturally. Migration also faces many challenges that should be addressed in a responsible and balanced way, and in a cooperative and constructive manner, between countries of origin and countries of destination and relevant international organizations and civil society.

International developments in recent years, including the increasing influence of globalization, have affected the international community, as well as international migration. These developments have led to an increase in the number of people seeking to migrate. Moreover, advances in information technology, coupled with more sophisticated means of communication and transportation, have encouraged citizens of developing countries to migrate to developed countries. The industrial boom and the decline in population growth have also resulted in the need of developed countries to attract working and highly skilled labour from developing countries. This has resulted in a wider gap between countries — both economically and socially. It has also prompted new motives for migration in poorer countries, particularly in the light of the prevailing shift from planned

economies to market-oriented economies, with accompanying growth in unemployment in poorer countries.

There is therefore a need for us to address this developmental imbalance in order to manage the phenomenon of migration — particularly illegal migration — while protecting the rights of migrant workers in receiving countries. We should seek to create a spirit of integration between migrants and the citizens of those countries, and constantly work to help generate legal migration by increasing its flow through new channels that maximize its developmental effects.

If the economic effects of international migration constitute an obvious reality, their social effects are also very significant. In this context, all countries are responsible, whether countries of origin or destination, for the protection and preservation of the rights of migrant workers and their families, regardless of their legal status, according to national legislation and international law — namely, the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, which entered into effect in July 2003, and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols, particularly the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea, and Air.

Egypt believes that all countries should ratify those conventions and that all instruments setting out the rights of migrants should be brought together in one document. Furthermore, we call for the strengthening of international cooperation in promoting the adoption of measures necessary to help migrants to integrate successfully into the communities of recipient countries in all economic, social and cultural fields.

There can be no doubt that linking remittances to development in both countries of origin and host countries is of the utmost importance in helping to eradicate poverty, improve living and working conditions and reduce unemployment. Migration policies should protect the economic and social interests of all the countries concerned, without ignoring the rights of the individual migrant.

Given that remittances from migrants play a prominent role in the economic and social development of countries of origin, every effort should be made to derive the greatest possible benefit from those remittances. This will require cooperation between all parties, in both countries of origin and host countries, aimed at reducing the cost of transferring remittances to countries of origin for investment in development processes.

Egypt would like to emphasize strongly that migrants' remittances represent a private source of capital that must not, under any circumstances, be considered as an alternative to assistance provided to countries of origin in connection with the global partnership to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development. Consequently, an increase in the volume of those remittances should not affect the volume of official development assistance to countries of origin.

It is important to highlight that the brain drain — the migration of highly skilled labourers and scientists from countries of origin to recipient countries — has a negative impact on the economic, political and social development of countries of origin. This phenomenon is of particular significance given the increasing number of highly skilled and specialized migrants who, by leaving their countries of origin, deprive such countries of the benefit of their investment in the education of those individuals. It is imperative, therefore, that we reaffirm the need to limit the negative effects of the selective migration policies of some recipient countries that lead to the "brain drain". Countries of origin should therefore be compensated for the loss resulting from the migration of highly skilled workers and professionals.

In this regard, Egypt supports the recommendations contained in the report of the Global Commission on International Migration, particularly with regard to directing joint investment projects and foreign assistance towards the sectors and countries that are most affected by the migration of highly skilled labour.

We also welcome the Secretary-General's initiative to ensure cooperation on immigration-related issues, as well as the appointment of a special representative to deal with this vital issue. We look forward to an agreement among the relevant States in that regard.

Due attention should also be given to capacity-building, particularly in developing countries, as that issue is one of the challenges in addressing global

migration in a holistic manner. In this context, Egypt emphasizes the need for technical and financial assistance to the source countries in order to provide support to national authorities entrusted with formulating migration policies.

The migration policies and procedures that Egypt has adopted are aimed at legalizing the status of illegal Egyptian migrants in the context of Egypt as a source country. It is in our interests to promote the legalization of the status of illegal Egyptian migrants to the extent that circumstances allow in the recipient countries and to work in close cooperation with our development partners to ensure the adoption of policies protecting migrants from collective deportation and integrating legal migrants and shielding them from racism and other forms of hostility. In that way we can protect legal Egyptian migrants, working within legal frameworks to cooperate with recipient countries and support development plans to create jobs, achieve sustainable development and eradicate poverty.

Egypt is also endeavouring to benefit from the expertise and experience of its migrants, who should be considered a national resource, and to strengthen the link between migrants and their homeland.

To conclude, Madam President, I wish you every success in your efforts during this session.

The President: I give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Minister of Social Affairs and Labour of Lithuania.

Mrs. Blinkevičiūtė (Lithuania): I would like to express my gratitude to the United Nations for having organized this important High-level Dialogue and for its significant contribution to migration, globalization and development issues.

This Dialogue is a great opportunity to discuss the interrelationship between development and migration processes. The enhancing of cooperation as we seek to increase synergy between migration and development is not only a priority for the European Union (EU), but also at the top of the global policy agenda.

Governments, international organizations and other actors involved in international policymaking increasingly perceive migration as a factor capable of contributing positively to the attainment of development goals. In seeking to maximize the benefits of migration and to minimize its negative impact, it is very important to ensure that appropriate policies are in place. We need to find the most effective ways and means of contributing to the enhancement of coherence between migration and development policies. Our activities in this field will also make an important contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Lithuania has already experienced both sides of the impact of migration on development. Our country is dealing mainly with economic migration. The impact has been very recent; however, some trends can already be discerned.

Unfortunately, we are confronting negative migration. At its peak in 1992, some 25,000 residents left the country — about 0.7 per cent of the population. At that time the change from a planned to a free-market economy resulted in a high unemployment rate in our country, and Lithuanians started to leave to work abroad more frequently.

Currently, potential Lithuanian migrants — especially young people — tend to move abroad for short periods for economic reasons and in order to gain experience. The number willing to emigrate is decreasing, because the economy is growing and there are now greater opportunities in Lithuania. There is also better knowledge now of the positive and negative aspects of emigration.

Emigration played a big role in the rapid decline of the unemployment rate and in the increase in wages in Lithuania. On the other hand, emigration has had an effect on the immigration of foreigners into the country. Owing to shortages in the qualified labour force, Lithuanian employers have started to employ foreign — non-EU — citizens more frequently.

We recognize the necessity of carefully regulated migration processes. Therefore, Lithuania is seeking to create a single comprehensive tool, both political and institutional, at all administrative levels, to ensure proper and adequate migration management. That will yield appropriate solutions to various problems, including demographic ones.

Lithuania is aiming to ensure the effective management of economic migration issues through domestic policy measures relating to, inter alia, the business environment, the labour market, human resources, skills improvement and health protection, as

well as by increasing the economic activity of the Lithuanian people.

Particular attention is paid to informing Lithuanian residents who intend to emigrate abroad about the risks of irregular migration and trafficking, and to informing those who have already left the country about opportunities if they return to Lithuania. Lithuania recognizes that effective return policies are required. For instance, we started a project aimed at the return of our scientists and doctors who work abroad and have observed a lively interest in it. Moreover, we have already seen some signs of return migration in the private sector due to its active development and economic growth and the subsequent increase in wages.

In that context, Lithuania emphasizes its interest in promoting close international cooperation. It is important to exchange best practices in solving migration issues, as well as to create new mechanisms to ensure the positive influence of migration on development.

We know that there is no single miracle solution to the problems we are discussing today. Therefore, we should encourage dialogue based on partnership and cooperation, involving all stakeholders and aimed at proper and effective solutions.

I believe that our meeting today will be an important step in the right direction.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Michael Browne, Minister of National Mobilisation, Social Development, Gender Affairs, Non-Governmental Organizations Relations, Local Government and Persons with Disabilities of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Mr. Browne (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): As this is the first time that I have the honour to address you in your current capacity, Madam, let me extend warm and sincere congratulations to you on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session. The delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines extends best wishes for a successful tenure of office, and we offer our support of policies, programmes and practices that objectively advance the welfare of the disadvantaged of the world.

This body is to be congratulated for frontally putting on the agenda the issue of international migration, contextualizing it within a developmental frame. We share the view of Secretary-General Annan, when he expressed the hope that this High-level Dialogue "will be a beginning, not an end". Of course, there are precursors to this encounter since the matter has occupied international attention for a long time. However, it does allow the global community the opportunity to address the issue in a collective manner that could create the necessary political will, thereby permitting the mobilization of relevant and requisite resources.

Although a tiny nation in the global scheme of things, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has a large historical and contemporary experience of migration. Our approach to the matter, deriving from that experience, is essentially humanist, and we humbly suggest that it is a philosophical prism through which the issue can be viewed.

The complex dialectic of immigration and emigration, which constitutes migration, demands an appreciation of the context of the phenomenon. If we accept the thesis of push-pull factors at work, clearly we must also acknowledge the connection between underdevelopment and development; that the relatively high standard of living of developed countries cannot, in historical and contemporary terms, be separated from the low standard of living of underdeveloped and underdeveloping countries. That is why issues of economic exploitation, whatever the modus — trade imbalances, poor working conditions, low wages — are inseparable from the issue before us, and that is why the issue of reparations must be part of this Dialogue.

The humanist perspective insists that the issue be addressed within the framework of a reconfiguration of the world's resources. This is the axis on which the Dialogue must spin, if it is to have meaning. The effect otherwise would be to perpetuate an injustice against "The wretched of the earth", to borrow the words of a Caribbean son, Frantz Fanon.

The Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines places no barriers on emigrants, persons wishing to leave our country, with the exception, naturally, of criminals. But, bearing in mind that emigrants include well-trained nationals, produced at considerable cost to our small nation, we subscribe to the view that appropriate protocols should be established. We in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines were very involved in the development of the Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol adopted by Commonwealth Ministers of Education on

1 September 2004. Of note also, is the 18 May 2003, adoption of the Commonwealth Code of Practice for the International Recruitment of Health Workers. The matter of protocols must be a focal point of our discussion.

Immigration is understandably complex, since it raises other issues, among which is security. In other contexts, though not in ours, the matter of xenophobia is of relevance. While we remain receptive to persons from all parts of the world, including retirees who enjoy the tranquillity and fine weather of our beloved homeland, we reserve the right of scrutiny and due diligence. That brings to the fore the issue of bilateral cooperation and agreement, and hence the international dimension.

It is noteworthy that our country operates under the revised Treaty of Chaguaramas which established the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Single Market and Economy. That Treaty makes provision, under articles 45 and 46, for the movement of CARICOM nationals. In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, we have passed the requisite legislation in support of certain categories of persons wishing to work and operate in our country.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines affirms its support for the intent and thrust of the April 2006 Brussels Declaration of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries on this issue. That Declaration addresses the gamut of issues from remittances to the repatriation of criminals.

In conclusion, it is necessary for this Dialogue to continue and for us to implement, as speedily as possible, the recommendations of this encounter. In so doing, we must always bear in mind the conditions which give rise to the phenomenon which occupies our attention today.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Jean de Dieu Somda, Minister of Regional Cooperation of Burkina Faso.

Mr. Somda (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): Madam, allow me at the outset to convey to you the warm and heartfelt congratulations of my delegation upon your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, and to pledge to you the full cooperation of my delegation.

The sixty-first session will go down in the annals of the United Nations because it is also the occasion of a first-ever High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. Burkina Faso, a country of emigration, is pleased that the High-level Dialogue is being held, as it provides a valuable opportunity for States to exchange views on their experiences in managing migration. It is also a framework for cooperation in such management, in order to do a better job addressing the phenomenon of migration.

Burkina Faso, a nation of about 12 million people, has more than one third of its population living abroad. Burkina Faso emigration is essentially a phenomenon of youth between the ages of 15 and 30 years. My country is convinced that we will not manage migration flows through security or border control measures. It is rather by attacking the root causes of migration that we will find appropriate solutions to the problem. As migration and development are inextricably linked, it is now more urgent than ever to work to close the gap that separates developed countries from developing countries, and to strengthen peacebuilding and the building of political stability in order to manage migration flows, as well as to prevent conflicts.

The countries of the North must take the migration aspect into account as an essential element in the financing of poverty reduction strategies. Developed countries must understand that the best way to limit the number of potential immigrants is to contribute to the development of their countries of origin. In that regard, we welcome the cooperation between Burkina Faso and the Republic of China on Taiwan. That cooperation has made possible the successful implementation of six national commitments made by President Blaise Compaore for the purpose of combating poverty and emigration by young people and women.

My country is convinced that poverty and the shortage of jobs and sufficient opportunities for the future are the major causes of migration. For almost half a century, my country has been taking numerous steps to better manage migration at the national level. Those steps have included the May 1993 establishment of the Supreme Council of Burkinabé Abroad; the November 2004 adoption of a strategic framework to reduce poverty; the setting up of the Ministry of Youth and Employment, to deal specifically with promoting the employment of young people; and the creation of a ministry to address the question of technical and vocational training to meet the need of the labour

market for qualified persons. We have also developed thousands of hectares of arable land and introduced small-scale irrigation, which will make it possible to plant off-season crops. Lastly, on 13 and 14 July 2006, Burkina Faso held a national symposium on migration whose main purpose was to develop a national policy on migration.

It would be illusory to believe that we can halt migration in the current atmosphere of globalization. We should instead focus on managing it well, for it represents not just something negative but also a factor in development for countries of origin, transit and destination. Let us therefore seize the valuable opportunity provided by the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development to lay the foundations for cooperation that will promote concerted and responsible management of the phenomenon of migration.

More than ever before, humanity is facing the momentous challenge of managing migration. Burkina Faso firmly believes, however, that with common determination and genuine cooperation between States and regional and international organizations, international migration will no longer be a scourge. Rather, it will be an important development factor for all our countries. We should therefore welcome the support of the International Organization for Migration, which has helped numerous African countries, including Burkina Faso, to better mobilize their diaspora populations to take part in national development. My country has great hopes for the High-level Dialogue, which is to produce relevant recommendations in the interests of our respective countries.

The President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Barbro Holmberg, Minister for Migration and Asylum Policy of Sweden.

Ms. Holmberg (Sweden): Migration is a strong, positive force. When people travel, meet and exchange ideas, societies can make leaps forward in development. That force contributes to the elimination of poverty in the world and to reaching the Millennium Development Goals.

Migrants are not victims; they are made victims by human smugglers and traffickers. To reach the full development potential of migration, we must fight those who treat people — men, women and children — as if they were goods on a market that can be sold to the highest bidder. We must fight discrimination and exploitation. Let me highlight five important issues for the Swedish Government.

First, people living and working in a country, regardless of whether they are migrant workers or citizens, should have the same rights and the same obligations. To achieve that, I think, we need regular migration. By contrast, irregular migration leaves people in our societies with limited rights and no safety. Irregular migration also reveals the existence of a dual labour market, one for citizens and those with work permits and one for those without work permits. I therefore believe we must increase opportunities for legal migration. Only when a person legally resides in a country can he or she be guaranteed the same rights as citizens of that country. That should include the right to family reunification, full access to the labour market and full access to the social security system. I think that, if employers or we in the rich countries need labour, we should be ready to pay for it. It is a question not only of managing migration, but also of values and human rights.

The second point I would like to make is that the root causes of forced migration cannot be solved by migration policy or border controls alone. We need progressive development policies. We all know that freer and fairer trade and agricultural policy have a far-reaching effect on development and poverty reduction in the world. It is every Government's obligation to create a society where women and men can build a future. It is also an international responsibility to create a more equal world. I am very proud that Sweden will this year reach the target of devoting one per cent of its gross domestic product to development assistance.

Thirdly, the right to asylum must be preserved. Those in need of international protection must have access to a safe haven. Our borders have to stay open. We must ensure that the measures taken to curb irregular migration do not prevent refugees from gaining the international protection that they are entitled to.

Fourthly, it should be easier for people to move from one country to another and back. We know that people bring knowledge. There is a brain gain. It is a huge challenge to make sure that all countries benefit from that, and not only receiving countries. I think circular migration is the key to its promotion.

Finally, I believe that the High-level Dialogue is not the end of a process; it is the beginning. We can no

longer address migration at the national and regional levels alone. The tools we have at our disposal are not enough. I believe it to be crucial for States to have a forum where we can continue this process in a constructive way, as well as on the global level. That forum should be intergovernmental, open-ended, consultative and non-decision-making in character. Sweden fully supports the idea put forward this morning by the Secretary-General. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Government of Belgium for its offer to organize the first meeting of such a forum.

The President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Alicia Muñoz, Minister of Government of the Republic of Bolivia.

Ms. Muñoz (Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, on behalf of the delegation of Bolivia, I would like to extend my congratulations to you, Madam President, on your election to preside over this important debate. We are convinced that, under your wise leadership, we will succeed in our undertaking.

It is estimated that 20 per cent of Bolivia's estimated population of 10 million people — which is to say, 2 million Bolivians — reside outside the country.

In recent decades, the end-points of migration flows have become more diverse as demand for labour has changed in receiving countries. At the European Parliament and in a meeting in Vienna in March of this year, Bolivia's President Evo Morales underscored that migration is a structural component of the economic inequality between countries.

As a country comprised primarily of indigenous peoples and headed by its first indigenous President, who was freely and democratically elected, Bolivia sees a need to emphasize the effects of migration on indigenous and rural communities. Migration has a fundamental impact on the economic, social and cultural foundations of exchange and complementarity upon which the organizational structures of rural and native economies are based. Entire communities have been depopulated throughout vast areas, and the management of their natural resources, their development and the strengthening of their identities have been deeply affected as a result. Migration has an indigenous face insofar as Bolivians are concerned.

While it is true that foreign remittances have important economic benefits, they also have a negative impact in that they undermine the structure of indigenous communities and villages. In addition, they entail a social cost since, owing to the liberalization of the economy, which accelerates the onset of the market economy, employment and exploitation are globalized, whereas salaries, human rights and citizens' rights are not. Emigrants are treated as merchandise, and the freedom to move or to transfer between countries is criminalized. It is therefore important that we consider intercultural factors and take comprehensive human rights approaches. Hence the significance of this major event organized by the United Nations.

There can be no doubt about the right to emigrate, which has been enshrined in international conventions and treaties. We do question, however, the absence of regulatory mechanisms and normative processes in the countries that receive cheap labour: for example, the supply of cheap labour is higher when there is greater demand for temporary or seasonal work.

We must also consider migration from the perspective of women. It is no longer appropriate in international forums to continue to analyse how the treatment of and trafficking in human beings has a greater impact on women; how sexual and labour exploitation is the second most lucrative business after drug trafficking; and how criminal groups and organizations find legitimacy in receiving countries. We therefore call for the adoption of legal measures to put an end to the demand that fosters the trade in human beings.

Bolivia has legal instruments at its disposal to combat crimes associated with human smuggling and trafficking, an issue to which it is devoting its efforts. To that end, we recently established an inter-ministerial commission on migration in which migrants and representatives from civil society organizations and indigenous peoples work alongside the Government.

We therefore believe that it is important for receiving countries to put in place effective cooperation mechanisms and to establish policies leading to the ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and other human rights treaties.

In line with the indigenous principle of "in order to live well", the Government of Bolivia is developing economic policies aimed at bringing about broad structural reforms that will re-energize production and

produce employment. Bolivia is enormously rich in natural resources and has plenty of land. It has an indigenous President who is prepared to regain the dignity and sovereignty of our people. We hope that our people will never again have to leave their homes, families, villages, communities, language, dress and everything else that makes up our cultural identity.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ng Eng Hen, Minister for Manpower of Singapore.

Mr. Ng (Singapore): The forces of globalization have in recent years escalated and forged closer economic integration among countries. The same processes that started with the ease of movement of capital and goods across borders have now also enabled labour mobility on a massive scale. As is now clearly evident, those migratory trends have both short- and long-term consequences for both the source and receiving countries. The High-level Dialogue therefore provides a timely opportunity to discuss international migration and its impact on economic and social development.

As a small city-State heavily dependent on global trade, Singapore has always welcomed foreign manpower to bolster our total workforce, which is now at about 2.4 million people. Today, more than one in four workers in Singapore is a foreigner. Without the contribution of foreign manpower, our economic growth would have been stymied by labour and skills shortages. We are a cosmopolitan city with a diverse population of people from different continents, who bring with them diverse ethnicities, cultures and customs.

But because of our limited size and small population, we allow foreigners to work in Singapore in a regulated manner through a work pass and visa framework with established rules and criteria. While Singapore is supportive of greater openness and global integration, like other countries we are also mindful of the economic, social and security implications of irregular migration. We therefore have a tough stance against immigration offenders and those involved in human smuggling and trafficking. To keep irregular migration at bay, we have a multipronged approach, with measures ranging from the enactment of deterrent laws to stringent enforcement. Penalties against illegal trafficking or deployment of foreign workers are punitive. For example, human traffickers face jail terms of up to five years under our Immigration Act.

Foreign nationals under our work pass system are protected under Singapore's laws and, in some situations, accorded even greater protection than locals. For example, we have enhanced our Penal Code to increase by one-and-a-half times the penalties for acts of abuse against foreign domestic workers by their employers. That is to send a clear signal that foreign workers have benefits and rights under our law.

To ensure that lower-skilled foreign workers understand and are able to assert their rights, we have stepped up promotional and outreach efforts to inform them of the available channels of assistance. Various administrative and assistance measures have also been implemented to protect migrant workers from abuse, unfair practices and exploitation. For foreign domestic workers in particular, we have introduced further protection measures, which include compulsory orientation courses for employers and workers, tighter regulation of recruitment agencies and strict enforcement against employment infringements and abuse.

As migration transcends national borders, collective efforts at the regional and global levels are required to reinforce national capacities for understanding and managing migration issues. Source countries can do their part in establishing measures to educate migrant workers in their rights and responsibilities and curb exploitative recruitment practices. Dialogue between source and receiving countries can also strengthen cooperation and enhance the regulation of migration. This United Nations Dialogue can facilitate the benefits of labour migration by articulating a common framework that fosters understanding and places appropriate responsibilities on source and receiving countries and other stakeholders.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Garba Lompo, President of the Human Rights Commission of Niger.

Mr. Lompo (Niger) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to convey warm congratulations to the General Assembly from His Excellency Mr. Tandja Mamadou, President of the Republic of Niger. Also, on behalf of my delegation, and in my own name, I would like to convey to you, Madam President, our sincere congratulations on the skill with which you are

directing this meeting. Finally, I wish to say how happy I am to be participating in this important meeting and to be adding the contribution of my country, Niger, to the effort of the international community to find solutions to the thorny problems of international migration.

In these early years of the twenty-first century, the phenomenon of migration is increasingly assuming disturbing proportions, due in particular to massive displacements of individuals with their often dramatic consequences. To meet this economic, social, political and security challenge, migration must be better coordinated through capacity-building in the relevant services. One of the major problems besetting our States in general, and Niger in particular, lies in the drastic lack of means to combat this phenomenon more effectively.

We should point out here that because of its pivotal position between sub-Saharan and North Africa, its porous borders and its limited means or action, Niger has to contend with substantial migratory flows. This phenomenon is very acute all along its borders where there is a convergence of drug traffickers, armed bandits and, above all, clandestine migrants from different places. The routes taken by those migrants are so many in number that Niger has practically become an open door for tens of thousands of would-be immigrants.

Mr. Baja (Philippines), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The emergence and development of transit migration promotes reflexes and behaviours which, if we are not careful, give rise to the emergence of groups or networks prepared to exploit the misery of those poor migrants in their desperate quest for happiness. What we are seeing is, so to speak, the emergence of an uncivil society living by illicit means. This situation, you will agree, can only lead to a vicious circle of tragedies inherent in uncontrolled migrations, including trafficking in human beings. Buffeted by poverty, driven by the illusion of finding better job prospects, migrants often become easy prey for criminal groups that specialize in human trafficking.

The question of persons in transit then forms part of an even more vast and far more worrisome problem. It is very difficult to know whether an individual is the victim of trafficking when he or she is in transit. Thus, transit migration must be approached within the broader context of the protection of fundamental rights and as an integral part of efforts to combat trafficking, both nationally and internationally.

The issue of transit migration needs to be analysed in order to find lasting solutions at the human, economic and security levels. It raises the importance of developing and implementing mechanisms based on the responsibility of States, whether the country of origin, the country of destination or the transit country.

Niger, which is a country of transit migration, is aware of the role that falls to it in joint action to ensure respect for and protection of the rights of migrants and to prevent and combat clandestine immigration and trafficking in human beings. In other words, Niger will deal with migration with all the requisite attention and resolve in the broader framework of subregional, regional and international cooperation.

In that regard, and very concretely, Niger would suggest the establishment of an efficient mechanism to combat clandestine immigration and trafficking in human beings. Such a mechanism would involve implementing on the ground a policy of respecting and protecting the rights of migrant workers and combating human trafficking.

There can be no guarantee that the rights of all migrant workers will be durably respected and protected unless we design and implement bold policies within bilateral and multilateral cooperative frameworks. It is in that way — and it is in that way alone — that we shall be able together to find the means to effectively and sustainably combat the phenomenon of clandestine immigration.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Hamid Awaluddin, Minister for Law and Human Rights of Indonesia.

Mr. Awaluddin (Indonesia): Allow me, on behalf of the Indonesian delegation, to congratulate Her Excellency Ms. Al-Khalifa on her election as the sixty-first President of the General Assembly. The Indonesian delegation will continue to do its utmost to support her and promote fruitful discussions at the sixty-first session of the General Assembly on this important issue.

We also wish to thank the Secretary-General for facilitating the necessary preparations for this Dialogue, and for the submission of his comprehensive

report entitled "International migration and development" (A/60/871).

Indonesia as a sending, receiving and transit country welcomes today's historic Dialogue. We sincerely hope that this Dialogue will bring us closer to better coherence, coordination and cooperation on migration. Migration issues should not divide but unite us. In the view of my delegation, that is the significance of this High-level Dialogue.

In this context, we are of the view that there is a need to understand in greater detail the impacts and the multidimensional nature of migration. That would require the development of a comprehensive global research and database system. We can subscribe to the proposal of establishing a global forum at the United Nations, so long as it involves all Member States, complements the regional efforts of Governments supported by relevant international organizations, such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and takes into consideration the inputs of civil society, the business sector and non-governmental organizations.

The High-level Dialogue must promote the formulation of a common and global set of priorities in view of the efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and to ensure the effective coordination of Government efforts at the national, regional and international levels, with the support of relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

Our efforts to ensure the protection of human dignity often are so easily overshadowed not only by economic and financial considerations, but also by acts of prejudice and ignorance. Protecting human dignity should not be restricted by shortsighted concerns perceived at the borders. Migrants with the hope of a better life abroad should not have to become prey to clandestine criminal groups.

For Indonesia, ensuring the orderly flow and protection of migrant workers continues to be a top priority. We have begun stepping up national coordination efforts not only with relevant ministries, but also with civil society, non-governmental organizations and the business sector. Having adopted Legislation 39/2004 on the protection and placement of Indonesian migrant workers, we are in the process of establishing a national body, under the direct supervision of the President, for the purpose of better managing the flow of Indonesian migrants through an institutional mechanism. We are currently in the final stages of adopting new legislation that combats trafficking in persons.

Indonesia endorses migration policies that empower migrants. Such policies should enable them to capitalize on entrepreneurship programmes through microfinance and simultaneously to enhance the role of diasporas. We also subscribe to the importance of temporary and circulatory migration programmes with a view to enhancing the benefit of international migration not only for the host and origin countries, but also and particularly for migrants and their families. In today's debate on international migration, we have been made aware of its apparent advantages, including migrant remittances, which have contributed, among other things, to the alleviation of poverty and hunger.

Bilaterally, the Indonesian Government has established agreements not only with receiving countries, but also among migrant sending countries. Indonesia has been proactive in approaching sending countries to better protect our migrants abroad.

At the regional level, Indonesia has in fact conducted and collaborated actively in several regional forums, not only in the Association of South-East Asian Nations, but with other countries in Asia and the Pacific. Through informal regional consultative processes, such as the Colombo Process and the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime, Indonesia has taken the concept of dialogue and coordination to new levels of common understanding and action-oriented activities.

To that end, Indonesia and Australia, as co-chairs of the Bali Process, are proud to submit contributions to the High-level Dialogue and future negotiations. Just yesterday, a side event was organized by the co-chairs to the participants of this Dialogue to share the experiences of the Bali Process and on how to enhance cooperation with other processes in the future.

Much has been attained, and what remains are hopes for some practical concrete actions that will pave the way for future cooperation, coordination and collaboration among all Governments on the issue of international migration for development for the simple purpose of maintaining human dignity and ensuring the welfare of our transnational migrants and their families. The President of the General Assembly may

rest assured that Indonesia will continue to lend her its support on this noble cause.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Emilia Maslarova, Minister of Labour and Social Policy of Bulgaria.

Mrs. Maslarova (Bulgaria) (*spoke in Russian*): Bulgaria welcomes the convening of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development as a necessary and timely step.

Bulgaria fully supports the position of the European Union delegation expressed at this forum. We share the opinion that migration can contribute to achieving a higher level of economic and social development. The Dialogue provides an opportunity to incorporate the international migration issue into the agenda for development within the framework of the Millennium Declaration.

It is important that our discussion continue after the High-level Dialogue has ended. It will provide us all with a beneficial exchange of experience. We feel that the duplication of structures and activities should be avoided. It would be useful to direct efforts towards better coordination between the existing structures and forums of the United Nations and the other international organizations working in that field.

As an external border country of the European Union from January 2007 on, Bulgaria is very interested in the creation of instruments for the integrated management of migration processes. In that regard, we are ready to cooperate at all levels in compliance with the common European Union policy and practice.

From the viewpoint of its national experience, Bulgaria attaches great importance to the regional approach to cooperation in the field of migration and development. As a very good example in that regard, we can point to the Rabat process.

The issue of statistics is an important element of national migration policies. To that end, we have conducted a sociological study on emigration attitudes among the adult population in Bulgaria. The High-level Dialogue is the first international forum at which we are presenting preliminary data provided by the research of Gallup International in August 2006. The study has been distributed to members of the Assembly. The results show that the number of citizens willing to emigrate for the long term has fallen by half to approximately 15,000-16,000. During the first year of Bulgaria's European Union membership, fewer than 4,000 people intend to seek work in European Union member States.

Where do Bulgarians want to work? First on their list of preferences is Spain, followed by Germany, the United States of America, Greece, Great Britain, and Canada. A norm for the migration behaviour of Bulgarian citizens is coming into focus and is comparable to that of the average European Union citizen. That fact is a result of the stable economy and the low unemployment rate in our country, currently at 8.76 per cent.

To conclude, let me emphasize once again that Bulgaria fully supports positive migration that can contribute to the full achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, as formulated in the Millennium Declaration.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Dato' Seri Mohd Radzi Sheikh Ahmad, Minister of Home Affairs of Malaysia.

Mr. Mohd Radzi (Malaysia): The convening of this meeting is both important and timely, given the increasing prominence that the issue of migration and development will play in the coming years, as well as the increasing complexity of that phenomenon.

As a country that is strategically located in the South-East Asian region and which has enjoyed sustained economic growth, Malaysia is all too aware of the role that migration can play in the development process and the difficulties that it poses. For Malaysia, the key challenge is to balance the need to maximize the economic benefits derived from migration and the desire to protect the interests of all concerned. We believe that the key to achieving that is to ensure the orderly management of migrant flows. In that regard, Malaysia's foreign worker policy is premised on the need to manage migration in cooperation with source countries in order to achieve mutual benefits.

As part of those efforts, the Malaysian Government has instituted the following measures. First, we have signed bilateral memorandums of understanding with seven source countries — Sri Lanka, the People's Republic of China, Thailand, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Vietnam and Indonesia — on the recruitment of foreign labour. Secondly, we are promoting international cooperation, including at the

regional level; in the context of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), there is active cooperation involving the foreign-workers-related agencies of ASEAN members. Thirdly, we are improving monitoring and supervising systems, as well as enforcement and preventive measures in accordance with the relevant laws of Malaysia. Finally, Malaysia conducted two amnesty exercises in 2002 and 2004, when illegal immigrants were repatriated to their home countries at the Malaysian Government's expense.

In ensuring the effectiveness of measures to regulate the orderly flow of migration, the legitimate concerns of receiving and sending countries alike must be reflected. In the case of Malaysia, the increasing numbers of migrant workers have given rise to cases of highly communicable diseases, such as hepatitis B, tuberculosis and leprosy, all of which were previously under control or eradicated altogether. At the same time, the number of crimes committed by migrants has increased three-fold, rising from 1,333 in 1992 to 3,113 in 2002. We are concerned that the statistics show that up to 40 per cent of crimes committed by migrants were violent ones.

Malaysia has taken various preventive measures to curb illegal migration, including through the introduction of a biometric system. Using that system, the details of outgoing illegal immigrants, as well as of new incoming legal foreign workers, are recorded in the Immigration Department's database as reference against illegal entries and other immigration offences. Such information is vital to ensuring that the welfare of foreign workers in the country are safeguarded, as well as to assisting authorities against criminal and terrorist activities carried out by migrants.

In the same vein, the issue of remittances is a crucial one for migrants. In that connection, I wish to emphasize that Malaysia imposes no restriction on workers' remitting money back home. In 2002, 1.2 million foreign workers remitted $640 million. In 2005, 1.8 million foreign workers remitted $768 million. As to the human rights of migrants, despite isolated cases of abuse, foreign workers enjoy full protection of their human rights under Malaysian law.

Like other countries, Malaysia is concerned over the issue of trafficking in persons. While we have sufficient laws to deal with that problem and are also in the process of enacting specific legislation to address it, we note that two major difficulties exist. One is the difficulty of distinguishing between genuine victims and those who knowingly allow themselves to be trafficked for economic gain. The second is the lack of resources for destination countries to repatriate the victims on a voluntary basis.

I would like to conclude by touching on the issue of the follow-up to the High-level Dialogue. As a firm believer in the multilateral process, we believe that the United Nations is the best forum for discussing global issues, which include international migration and development. At the same time, clarity is required in the follow-up process itself so that it will not be duplicative and ineffective. We therefore have an open mind on that issue and look forward to playing a constructive role in the ensuing discussions.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao, Minister of the Interior of Pakistan.

Mr. Khan Sherpao (Pakistan): It gives me great pleasure to be here today representing Pakistan at a forum in which issues of tremendous importance are being addressed. We have come together looking for innovative solutions and ideas to better manage migration and address the needs of our peoples and our countries.

We would like to place on record Pakistan's deep appreciation and admiration of the initiative taken by Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

Pakistan attaches great importance to the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. It provides a unique opportunity to the international community to build common approaches to promoting coherence between migration and development and to identify ways to increase the development benefits of migration and reduce its negative impact.

We wish to align ourselves with the statement made by the Minister of Home Affairs of South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Migration in an interdependent world has benefits for sending and receiving countries alike. That requires cooperation among countries at the bilateral, regional and global levels to address the issues of immediate concern. The unprecedented level of attendance at this Dialogue and the focus and attention it has generated on migration issues must be used to lay the foundation

for a sustained dialogue and enhanced international cooperation on migration and development.

While recognizing the potential of migration to contribute to world development, it is important also to recognize the need to establish adequate and transparent mechanisms to channel migration in a safe, legal, humane and orderly manner in order to combat irregular migration and prevent enabling conditions for organized crime and the exploitation of people.

The protection of the rights of migrants and victims of trafficking is of great concern to us. The Government of Pakistan will work with other countries to ensure the well-being and dignity of its migrants and to insist on the dignified return of its nationals, where required. We attach great importance to the implementation of existing United Nations and International Labour Organization conventions on the protection of migrant workers.

Interestingly, the preparatory process for the High-level Dialogue has already made a significant contribution by moving the migration and development debate to a higher plane. In Pakistan, we take a holistic view of the whole issue when formulating our migration policy. The ongoing consultative process involves representatives of Government, civil society and international organizations. A two-day inter-ministerial conference was organized on 29 and 30 August 2006, in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration; it resulted in inputs from all stakeholders for an integrated and cohesive response from Pakistan at this important Dialogue on migration and development.

Pakistan is happy to see international migration issues move up on the global agenda. We strongly favour more intense international cooperation and collaboration on international migration to enhance its development impact. Our task, through this Dialogue, is to develop a coherent approach to effectively deal with the challenges and opportunities associated with the large movement of migrants across national frontiers and between continents, and to optimize the development impact of this phenomenon. Pakistan believes that without the requisite machinery and institutional support, it will be difficult to advance the objective of generating and sustaining the much-needed coherence and coordination on migration issues. We would therefore favour building on existing arrangements to further the global dialogue on migration and development. In our view, one way of doing that would be to allow the Global Migration Group to meet inter-governmentally under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council.

We are here today with a renewed commitment to continue to work together with the rest of the membership to strengthen the process in order to utilize migration for the betterment of our peoples. Let us remember today that in our united efforts we must bear in mind that, ultimately, we want the best for our fellow human beings and for our countries. That can be achieved only if we work together positively, recognizing the importance of migration in our lives and in our world. Let us commit ourselves to growth and betterment, not only for ourselves but for each other. I am sure that together we can make a great difference.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ali S. J. Errishi, Secretary of Expatriate, Immigrant and Refugee Affairs of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

Mr. Errishi (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya): It gives me great pleasure to congratulate Ambassador Al-Khalifa on her election as President of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. I am also delighted that an Arab woman holds that high office in the service of peace, security and prosperity. We are fully confident that she has the wisdom and experience to guide us through this Dialogue, which seeks to make the role of migration in development even stronger. I would also like to take this opportunity to express our support for the statement that the Minister of Home Affairs of South Africa has delivered on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The fact we are holding this Dialogue at such a high level reflects the extent to which the international community recognizes the important role that migration plays in international relations. Throughout history, migration has helped to create and sustain fruitful contacts among various peoples and cultures. There is no doubt that migration has contributed to the free commerce of ideas and experiences, and there is no doubt that it has been one of the main engines of material and intellectual progress in our world.

However, migration into sovereign spaces cannot be constructive unless the cultural, legal and political realities which define those sovereign spaces are taken into account. Ignoring that fact will have nothing but

negative consequences on the important role that migration plays in bringing peoples of the world closer together. While migration contributes to the increase in the rates of intellectual and economic growth of many countries, it can also at times be a serious challenge to other countries. It is therefore imperative that we agree on realistic mechanisms that recognize the right of sovereign States to protect their borders and that, at the same time, respect the human rights of immigrants.

The cost of chaotic, illegal migration is much greater than its benefits. It may even at times threaten the national security of certain countries. For when the number of illegal immigrants reaches a certain limit, the citizens of the country in question begin to feel that their economic, social and cultural interests are at risk. In that event, political and social tensions begin to emerge, which in turn may lead to instability and civil unrest. Also, when the market of a given country cannot absorb large numbers of illegal immigrants and, thus provide them with jobs, some of those immigrants tend to engage in illicit economic activities such as drug trafficking, organized crime, theft and trafficking in human beings.

It is for those reasons that my country has committed itself to the view that the problem of illegal immigration cannot be solved without dealing with its root causes. We have consistently called on the international community to live up to its responsibilities and to contribute to the economic development of the countries from which immigrants flow.

The flow of illegal immigrants can only come to an end through sustainable development and long-term investment, which will create jobs that offer decent wages. It is in the pursuit of that plan that my country believes that it is important to have an African-European summit to discuss and find sustainable solutions to the problem of illegal immigration — solutions that would protect the rights, security and dignity of legal immigrants while at the same time creating conditions which will save millions of people from subjecting themselves to the dangers and indignities of illegal migration. Towards that end, I am happy to announce that my country is working to organize a meeting for African and European ministers to discuss migration and development.

I would also like to mention that, as a part of its commitment to the economic integration of the countries in the African Union, Libya has invested in agricultural and industrial projects in a number of African countries. My country has also contributed to the funding of a number of development projects in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. For example, my country has invested in five projects in some of the countries in the Sahel and Sahara grouping. Studies are also under way to expand that programme to include seven other African countries.

In addition to that, in December of 2005 my country announced the establishment of the Qadhafi Project for African Youth, Children and Women, in cooperation with the appropriate international organizations. The aim of that project is to help end poverty, hunger and disease, to spread education and to train African women while helping to protect their rights.

Finally, I would like to say that we agree with what the Secretary-General states in his report (A/60/871), that immigration is not a process in which one party obtains a comparative advantage at the expense of other parties. Indeed, in my country there are more than a million immigrants who work in various sectors of our economy and make more than $2 billion a year, a good part of which goes back to their families in their countries of origin.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Doug Shane Gibson, Minister of Immigration, Labour and Training of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas.

Mr. Gibson (Bahamas): The Commonwealth of the Bahamas welcomes the holding of this High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, which brings international migration in all its many facets to the table for discussion and dialogue among Member States. The Bahamas would like to align itself with statements made by the Minister of Home Affairs South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The Bahamas fully supports the establishment of a better way to match the supply with the demand for migration in a safe, legal, humane and orderly way, in order to maximize the societal and human development potential of global labour mobility with the development of public and private stakeholders. The Commonwealth of the Bahamas is an archipelagic nation with 700 islands and more than 2,000 limestone-formed islets and cays. Our southernmost island,

Inagua, is 60 miles north-east of Cuba, while Bimini is only 50 miles south-east of Florida. The territorial waters of the Bahamas are some 100,000 square miles and its land mass is 5,400 square miles. Thirty of our islands are inhabited, and we have a total population of approximately 308,000, almost two thirds of whose members reside in our capital, New Providence.

The preceding remarks were designed not only to sensitize Member States as to how small we are in size and population, but to also make them aware of how vulnerable we are in terms of policing our vast borders.

The Bahamas has an economy which is based principally on tourism and financial services, with very small inputs from the agricultural and industrial sectors. We welcome more than 5 million visitors annually, and the financial sector is mainly composed of foreign banks. It is evident, therefore, that migration has positively impacted the Bahamas in many respects.

However, as noted in the report of the Secretary-General (A/60/871), there are many challenges in managing migration, including the prevention of irregular or unauthorized migration. In this connection, the negative side of migration for the Bahamas is that for the past 60 years we have been plagued with illegal migration. In addition to the normal regularization of non-citizens for visits, business, employment, family, education, training, asylum, et cetera, a large number enter by simply running their vessels aground in shallow waters and taking up residence with the assistance of non-citizens, with or without status, who are already in the country.

Illegal immigrants then become a serious burden on the social and educational services of the country because their numbers are not taken into account when we are planning for new schools and health services. The end result is that institutions are not able to adequately accommodate the citizens and legal residents for whom they were built. Illegal immigrants also become a serious national security issue because some of those who enter our country are either convicted criminals or fugitives from justice.

For these and many other reasons, it is necessary for States to implement comprehensive migration policies and have constant dialogue with neighbouring States in order to establish workable solutions for matters of mutual concern that affect them.

Opportunities in our country have provided a comfortable standard of living for citizens and legal migrants. However, no country can feel totally safe when there are significant numbers of strangers within its borders who are also reaping benefits designed only for its taxpaying public. In that respect, irregular migration has for many years negatively impacted the Bahamas.

During our brief stay in New York, we will begin a dialogue with relevant States with a view to coming up with workable solutions to these most vexing problems. We would like to again welcome this forum to allow Member States to discuss matters that concern us all.

I thank members for their attention; it is my sincere hope that we can all work together to come up with workable solutions to ease the burden of illegal migration on receiving States.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Eric Solheim, Minister of International Development of Norway.

Mr. Solheim (Norway): Hardly any force is changing the world as rapidly as the force of migration. Allow me to speak on a personal note for a little while. When I was a young boy in Norway, not so many centuries ago, and Norway was an all-white — or maybe I should say all-pink — society and an all-Christian society, I myself and my comrades would very gladly have paid an entrance fee to see most of the people in this Hall today. I had hardly ever seen anyone from Sri Lanka, my second homeland, or anyone from Africa. Now my children are running around in exactly the same streets, and their best friends come from China, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey. What a change. And of course similar changes are going on all over the globe.

The contribution of this meeting here in New York today is to put migration at the top of the global agenda, where it should stay, as one of the main topics of the world today. Some say that we should not discuss this subject at the United Nations. Others reply, "What else should we discuss at the United Nations, if we should not discuss the main issues of the day?", or "If we should not discuss it at the United Nations, then where else should we discuss the matter of immigration and emigration?"

I think it is also absolutely pertinent that migration is being discussed in the city of New York, which, for Norwegians, was the first place they met a foreign country when we had our huge wave of migration 75 or 100 years back. Today, there are as many Norwegians or people of Norwegian origin in the United States as there are in our own country. And where they put their feet on foreign soil was right here in New York, many of them on Ellis Island. So New York is the right place to start the international debate on migration.

I would also thank the Secretary-General for the way he has put migration on the international agenda, which is with a sense of optimism. We all know there are problems. There are the problems of trafficking, abuse and brain drain; there are so many problems related to migration. But at its core, it is a positive development, making life better for so many people that most migrants are winners in today's world of globalization. Basically, nearly all aspects of migration are positive. So we should face this debate with optimism, not as an area mainly characterized by problems. It is in that spirit that we approaching the issue today, which, from our perspective, is very good.

I will be honest: the debate on migration in Norway, as a new country receiving migrants, has for the past two decades basically been a debate on how to integrate people. That is an important debate and a debate that will continue. But we have hardly faced the other debate, which is the link between migration and development. That is the new debate which has been put on the international agenda. The very close relationship between migration and development has been an eye-opener for us. We want to approach this issue with a twofold approach.

First, in a migrant's country of origin, there should be a choice. People should have a choice between migrating and staying, which means that whatever can be done to assist in the process of development should be done. Norway is approaching the target of directing 1 per cent of our gross national product towards development aid, and we are close to reaching it. The Swedes may be ahead of us, but we want to reach that aim in the very near future — that is part of our contribution to development. That is one choice.

There are others. When people come to the recipient country, they should have rights. They should have rights with regard to the labour market and human rights, and they should be offered decent work. Therefore, choice and rights would be our approach to the new debate on how to link development and migration.

We also note that there should be a particular emphasis on the matter of women and children. We tend to believe that migrants are men, while the United Nations Population Fund and others remind us firmly that half of the migrants are women. Women tend also to be more easily abused in the process of migration. Thus, the issues related to women and children should be in the forefront of the migration debate.

When approaching migration issues we should be practical, as opposed to discussing theories surrounding migration. The practical debate that we will engage in with our immigrant communities concerns the issue of remittances: what can the Governments of the international system do to put pressure on the banking system to introduce more competition in order to reduce the cost of remittances? It is a shame that some people are paying 20 per cent of the amount they want to send back to their relatives, to the people transferring the money. Those transfer costs should be reduced and we should be part of that process.

Finally, looking forward, migration must have its place on the global agenda. We fully support the global forum, and we pay tribute to the Government of Belgium for being ready to hold future events in that regard. We will be able to listen to all of the advice from the International Organization for Migration and the International Labour Organization, and from Governments which have much more experience than Norway in this field. But the entire process has been an eye-opener to us. We are at the beginning of the process, not at the end. I would end by paraphrasing a well-known phrase of Churchill, from the Second World War, which I think also describes where we stand in the debate on migration today: this is not the end, it is not even the beginning of the end; but what you are seeing here today may be the end of the beginning of the debate on migration.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Athauda Seneviratne, Minister of Labour and Foreign Employment of Sri Lanka.

Mr. Seneviratne (Sri Lanka): Let me begin by conveying the greetings of the President and the people

of Sri Lanka to all the participants attending the High-level Dialogue. The High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development will help us to identify appropriate ways and means to maximize the development benefits arising out of migration phenomena.

We are pleased that international migration has come to the top of the global agenda this year, and it is our expectation that this trend will continue so that we can address all aspects of the issue in a more comprehensive manner. We are pleased that there is an emerging global consensus that labour migration is a positive force for development.

As rightly highlighted in the Secretary-General's report, there is a convergence of views that migration is a development-friendly phenomenon, benefiting both countries of origin and destination. Remittances to developing countries are now more than three times the volume of overseas aid, and close behind the level of global foreign direct investment. The overseas diaspora also represents a development resource for the home country for promoting investments, transfer of skills and stimulating exports for development.

We are also concerned that the focus of the meeting and the current international emphasis on issues connected to migration has not placed adequate emphasis on the need for a rights-based approach to international migration. We have also failed to define clearly the linkages between economic growth and sustainable development and migration, and more work is needed in this regard.

There are a number of other matters for consideration. For example, policies in developed countries continue to favour the admission of skilled workers rather than low-skilled workers. Developing countries can ill afford such a brain drain, as the loss of trained manpower skills affects the level and quality of services needed in education and health care in the country of origin. At the same time, the protection and treatment of workers is an issue of concern. There are countless stories of victims of trafficking, female domestic workers in forced labour situations, non-payment of wages, poor conditions of work and growing racism and discrimination. Women migrant workers are particularly vulnerable, and it must not be forgotten that they represent about half of the global migrant workforce. In some diaspora communities we have also observed the emergence of illegal activities and extortion of the migrants for purposes of funding insurgent movements and terrorism in their home countries.

Clearly, there is a need for increased international cooperation. There is already a robust body of key United Nations and international conventions, which spell out a normative framework for principles and good practices in respect of labour migration. In that regard, we call upon all States to ratify, in particular, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990). The ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration can also serve as a politically binding and valuable guide. In addition, in order to curb illegal migration, opportunities must be provided for legal migration.

If we are to promote international migration as an instrument of global development, we also need the participation of all stakeholders — Governments, social partners, civil society and migrants themselves — in migration policymaking. The international community also needs to achieve greater coherence and coordination in its approaches. I am happy to note that a Global Migration Group has already been formed and that the Secretary-General has proposed a consultative global migration forum at the United Nations.

In conclusion, I would like to note that migration and development is only one element among the issues pertaining to migration and development. Let us use this High-level Dialogue to evolve a win-win situation for origin and destination countries, as well as for the migrants themselves. And it is imperative that we continue the dialogue on all migration issues at the highest levels, for that purpose.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ze'ev Boim, Minister of Immigrant Absorption of Israel.

Mr. Boim (Israel): As the Secretary-General said in his remarks this morning, international migration today cries out for a global discussion. Indeed this is an important forum, and I look forward to our discussions in the coming days.

Israel is an immigrant country. Since its establishment, waves of immigrants have arrived on its shores, carrying with them the hopes and dreams of a better future. For 2,000 years, the vast majority of Jews

lived outside of Israel and could only pray to return to their homeland. The gathering of the Jewish people in their own land through immigration is central to the national ethos of the Jewish people. Indeed, the Israeli immigrant experience is the very story of the modern Jewish State.

Today, Israel's population is over 7 million people — of those 7 million, 27.5 per cent are foreign born. Those "ascending" to Israel from Russia, Ethiopia, France and South America, as well as a host of other countries, experience a process in Israel specifically tailored to their needs, which better facilitates their successful absorption into society.

In Israel, immigrant integration begins with learning Hebrew, the national language. Multiple frameworks exist for studying Hebrew, ranging from full-time schools to online courses. Financial assistance is also provided for immigrants. The average newcomer, with a wife and two children, receives an "absorption basket", with a value of $10,000, for living expenses during their first six months in the country. These subsidized months give immigrants the opportunity to use their first half-year in Israel to learn Hebrew, find a job, rent an apartment and prepare themselves for their new lives.

Satisfactory employment for immigrants also remains a critical concern for Israel. In recent years, Israel has absorbed vastly differing groups of immigrants, some coming with advanced degrees and highly developed, technical skills, while others arrive illiterate in their native language. As such, vocational assistance is available for new immigrants in a variety of programmes. These include licensing and qualifying courses, vocational training and employment centres offering career guidance, placement services and individual assistance.

Israel's public and private sectors have particularly benefited from immigrants. Since the beginning of the 1990s, Israel has welcomed large waves of newcomers, primarily from the former Soviet Union — among them, many doctors, engineers and scientists. Many artists, writers and musicians also immigrated at that time, leading to a dramatic enrichment in arts and culture.

Throughout all this, Israel has tried to respect the indigenous culture of the immigrant communities. The outcome has been the growth of a rich society built on a tapestry of multiculturalism, pluralism and tolerance.

Very special relations exist between Israel and the Jewish communities around the world. As a result, Israel has experience on how to nurture partnerships between Diaspora and origin communities. In that regard, Israel works with international partners to share this information and cooperate on a variety of levels.

Like other countries, Israel also faces challenges presented by the tragic growth of human trafficking. Trafficking is a crime that imperils the lives of those subjected to it. As a signatory to both the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its supplementary Protocol on Trafficking in Persons, Israel continues to work in this area and combat trafficking.

Israel is wholeheartedly committed to welcoming immigrants and fully integrating them into society while respecting their cultural heritage. Israel will work with international partners to maximize the societal and human development potential of the global labour market.

Indeed, Israel's commitment to bettering the migrant experience is deeply rooted in the Jewish tradition. As it is written in the Bible, Exodus, chapter 23, verse 9, "And you know the soul of the stranger, because you too were strangers in the land of Egypt."

The President returned to the Chair.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Paul Antoine Bohoun Bouabré, Minister of State, Minister of Planning and Development of Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Bouabré (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): I wish, on behalf of Côte d'Ivoire, to express my gratitude for the opportunity to participate in this High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. Côte d'Ivoire is traditionally a country marked by intense international and internal migration. More than two out of five persons living in Côte d'Ivoire are migrants. The majority of immigrants are men — 58 per cent of the population. The number of migrant women is, however, increasing. Another characteristic of immigrants is that they tend to be of working age: 62.5 per cent are between the ages of 15 and 40.

As a general rule, international migrations are driven by economic reasons. Whether rural or urban, men or women — migrants are usually looking for something better — a well-paying job and a lifestyle

conducive to self-fulfilment. International and internal migration in Côte d'Ivoire has contributed significantly to the development of our country, but also to the development of the countries of the West African subregion.

While international migration has been a factor of development for Côte d'Ivoire, so it has also been for the migrants' countries of origin. Most immigrants transfer large sums of money to their country of origin. Judging by the activities of the four electronic transfer systems, in 2004 and 2005 respectively, funds amounting to $100 million and $97 million were transferred from Côte d'Ivoire to countries of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA).

The level of integration of immigrant populations is exemplary. Except for participation in politics and restrictions on rural property ownership, foreign populations enjoy all economic and social rights. But like any social phenomenon, given its scope and concentrated nature, migration poses serious problems, to which the Government needs to find sustainable solutions. They have to do mainly with land ownership and how to manage immigrant populations, especially their children born in Côte d'Ivoire.

For development to be sustainable in Africa, it must be dealt with on a regional basis. Côte d'Ivoire supports this and actively participates in regional economic integration. We would like to point out that a number of issues are being dealt with appropriately on a regional collective basis. Migration in Africa is one of those issues, and it would be a good thing to place this question on the agenda of urgent issues in Africa in general and in the West African subregion in particular.

The social, political and military crisis that has been occurring in Côte d'Ivoire since December 1999 has brought about a deterioration of the already precarious situation of the most vulnerable people: primarily children, youth, women and immigrants. This crisis has created new categories of people in difficulty, particularly internally displaced persons, child soldiers and ex-combatants. Precariousness exposes Ivoirians and foreigners to all types of risks, leading to uncertainty, insecurity and increasing poverty. This is why people risk going to Western countries: primarily North America and Europe. Côte d'Ivoire is gradually becoming a country of emigration.

In order to meet the challenge of sustainable development, the only viable response to the precariousness that I have mentioned, it is essential that African countries have structured, organized, enlightened governments, in other words, modern States must be built and consolidated. This is a challenge for Africa, a long-term task in which we in Côte d'Ivoire have been engaged with more or less positive results since independence in 1960. The crisis of the past few years, however, is jeopardizing our efforts.

In a context of subregional economic integration and aggressive globalization, Côte d'Ivoire cannot close itself off from the rest of the world. It will always welcome people given its position as a main pole of regional economic growth. That is why we welcome this High-level Dialogue, which allows us to share ideals and unite our efforts in defining the best possible policies and effective strategies for managing migration for sustainable development in the interests of our people.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Albert Kan Dapaah, Minister of the Interior of Ghana.

Mr. Kan Dapaah (Ghana): Madam President, my delegation would like to congratulate you on your election and to express appreciation to the Secretary-General for his incisive report on international migration and development (A/60/871).

Migration is a fundamental feature of today's world and demands attention at the international level. It is, therefore, not surprising that so much attention has been focused on this High-level Dialogue as a way of exploring new ways of making the greatest possible use of migratory flows. Ghana firmly believes that in order to give recognition to the growing link between migration and development, international migration has to find a way into country development strategies, such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. This, however, can happen effectively only if the nature and scope of migration are fully understood and addressed within the globalization framework.

To this end, data availability, research and analysis need to be enhanced to put into place coherent national and international policies and actions that can maximize its benefits and reduce its negative effects. Brain drain is no doubt one of the most adverse effects of migration for countries, like Ghana, which have a

good educational system but whose economic situation cannot provide adequate job and development opportunities for everyone.

In this regard, my delegation would like to support calls for the promotion of return programmes in countries of origin as well as destination, thus helping to transfer back knowledge and skills acquired, providing our diaspora a certain level of ownership in Ghana's development. We also call for the promotion of ethical recruitment practices or help to replenish the stock of brain power in countries of origin by supporting education and training within the framework of their development assistance.

Remittances and the income multipliers they create are crucial resources for development and sustenance strategies in countries of origin, as in most cases they now exceed official development assistance. Money remitted by migrants reaches even the most remote rural areas and has significant impact at the individual and household consumption levels, thereby alleviating poverty and creating immediate multiplier effects for the local economy.

But despite the huge increase in remittances, most countries of origin are still struggling with how to harness effectively the capital created for national development. Initiatives encouraging migrants to return to their country of origin to share their knowledge, expertise and experience have yielded positive results. Ghana, for instance, has made efforts to reach out to its diaspora to encourage them to invest in businesses and transfer their skills. It was in this regard that the Government adopted the Dual Citizenship Law in 2001.

In Ghana, as in most of Africa and indeed the world, we are witnessing an increasing feminization of migration. More and more women engage in traditionally male migration patterns, moving across long distances to fulfil their own and their family's economic needs. This gender phenomenon has serious social consequences within countries of origin with critical implications for migration management. In this regard, it gives me great pleasure to announce that Ghana has recently passed a human trafficking law and set up a national task force to see to its implementation. We are also a signatory to the ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) Political Declaration and the Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings.

Economic and opportunity disparities, armed conflicts and related factors will continue to provide impetus for labour mobility. The delegation of Ghana, therefore, supports the establishment of a mechanism to match supply with demand better in safe, legal, humane and orderly ways to maximize the societal and human development potential of global labour mobility.

The Government of Ghana concurs with the view highlighted in the Secretary-General's report that policy coherence and harmonization need to be enhanced at the national and global levels. It appreciates the support that it continues to get from IOM and the Global Migration Group, and recommends that they be endorsed by this Dialogue as inter-agency mechanisms to promote coherence and collaboration among multilateral agencies.

In conclusion, let me re-echo the Secretary-General's remarks that we have everything to gain and nothing to lose by exploring international migration in a more systematic and a more informed way. My delegation is confident that the deliberations and outcome of this Dialogue will meet our expectations and will provide a framework on how to make migration work for all through cooperation.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Ralph Fonseca, Minster for Home Affairs and Public Utilities of Belize.

Mr. Fonseca (Belize): It affords me particular pleasure, Madam, to congratulate you on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, which once again proves the adage that women hold up half the sky.

Allow me to commend the preparatory work conducted by Member States, the United Nations, the International Organization for Migration and civil society organizations, whose contributions represent an important input in the context of our present discussions.

As numerous speakers before me have acknowledged, the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development is the first major event in United Nations history to focus exclusively on international migration issues. It presents a unique opportunity for the international community to strategize and develop policies to

enhance the role of migration in promoting development and poverty reduction.

Our challenge is manifold. Not only must we reach a common understanding of the complexities of international migration as a phenomenon in and of itself, but we must also contextualize that phenomenon in our development agenda.

Above all, we must ensure that our discussions to this end move beyond ephemeral words and result in concrete actions. We recognize the United Nations as the appropriate platform to facilitate these discussions.

Since Belize's independence in 1981, migration flows have transformed the social and demographic composition of Belize, changing it from a country with a majority Afro-Caribbean population to one with a Mestizo ethnic majority. The Government of Belize formulated policies and, with the assistance of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), embarked on programmes to ensure the successful assimilation of these new Belizeans. The programmes allowed farmers access to arable land and provided free education and free primary health care. Legislation was put in place to allow for permanent residency or citizenship. A Refugee Department was established to process the large number of refugees, and the Labour Department increased the number of employment permits granted. In 1999, an amnesty came into effect, allowing undocumented migrants and recent arrivals to apply for permanent residency.

As the report of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean observed, as the Government undertakes efforts to respond to the challenges that immigration flows have posed for the country over the past 20 years, new migration trends are emerging. These trends include inflows of more, generally better qualified, people from Asia and North America, outflows of highly qualified natives, particularly women, and the relocation of families.

The concept of co-development put forward in the Secretary-General's report on international migration and development is pivotal for rethinking migration as a tool for development. International migration is intrinsically linked to the development of both receiving and sending countries. Migration flows can, indeed, satisfy the labour demands of advanced economies while reducing unemployment and underemployment in countries of origin and in the process generate remittances, savings and know-how for the benefit of the latter. The emphasis in co-development is on the complementarities between countries of origin and countries of destination, which operate in a mutually beneficial symbiotic cycle.

Given the deliberate decision to link migration and development, the concept of co-development necessitates coherence in policymaking at the national and international levels. Furthermore, its emphasis on complementarities likewise necessitates a new approach to migration management, founded on the principle of common interests and shared responsibilities. But, most important of all, it requires a commitment to enduring multilateral and multidimensional cooperation.

In moving forward, we must set policies aimed at enhancing migration's contribution to development and reducing its negative impact. These policies at their core must respect the human dimension of migration. The Secretary-General rightly notes that the benefits of international migration, not only for the migrants themselves, but also for receiving societies, are contingent on the protection of migrant's rights. We should encourage the universality and support the full and effective implementation of the various human rights and international labour instruments that make up the normative framework on international migration.

Although the shaping of migration continues to be a sovereign right of States, they must collaborate on the issue and move to coordinated action. The High-level Dialogue presents the first major opportunity for Member States to find concrete means of enhancing that collaboration, in the process ensuring that the potential contributions of migration to development are fully realized. We fully endorse and associate ourselves with those who are promoting the building of a mechanism for effective multilateral evaluation and cooperation to address international migration.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jean Généus, Minister for Haitians Living Abroad of Haiti.

Mr. Généus (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): The Republic of Haiti welcomes the initiative and the vision of the General Assembly, under the leadership of Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in organizing a High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. In so doing, the Assembly remains true

to its tradition of being an essential platform for the great contemporary debates challenging the international community.

The link between migration and development is well illustrated in the context of Haiti, a major source of international migration. However, whereas the positive effects of migration on countries of destination are quite clear, its benefits for Haiti are more nuanced. Indeed, much remains to be accomplished to maximize the potential of migration to contribute not only to poverty reduction, but also to the development of our country.

The Republic of Haiti welcomes the primary objective of this High-level Dialogue: to debate the multidimensional aspects of international migration and development. The High-level Dialogue also seeks appropriate ways and means to derive maximum advantage from the phenomenon of migration, while reducing its harmful effects.

Migration offers an opportunity to obtain better social and economic opportunities, which improve the well-being of individuals and families. Migration also promotes the economic emancipation of female migrants within their households, where they are increasingly playing a major role. That is a positive development that should be supported. Moreover, migration contributes to poverty reduction in Haiti through remittances, which bring in more than $1 billion per year, or more than 25 per cent of the gross domestic product.

Migration's contributions to the development of Haiti should thus be taken better into account, through a series of actions. The means of legal entry to destination countries, which have a great demand for low- or unskilled migrant labour, should be increased. Next, we should promote protection of the rights and interests of migrants — particularly women, the most vulnerable sector of the population — so that they all can contribute further to the Republic of Haiti's development efforts.

We must also address the crucial issue of large-scale regular emigration on the part of highly skilled nationals. That exodus of skills is both a loss of investment in human capital and a hindrance to the development of social services and the private sector. In that connection, the Haitian Government would like to work together with countries of destination to promote policies and programmes encouraging professional migrants to contribute powerfully to the transfer of technologies and the sharing of knowledge, skills and contacts with their countries of origin.

For its part, the Republic of Haiti is fully aware that its development and the management of the migration issue remain the responsibility of its Government. In addition, thanks to technical support from the International Organization for Migration, the Government has already established an interministerial and intersectoral group that is working to formulate a policy on migration in general and the migration ob labour in particular. Haiti will also seek to further encourage intervention by the private sector and civil society in order to capitalize on the financial capacity of the diaspora to contribute to the country's development.

Given the shortcomings of unilateral measures, the Haitian Government calls earnestly for the strengthening of bilateral and multilateral cooperation to find solutions that are favourable to both countries of origin and countries of destination.

At the global level, Haiti favours strengthening the Global Migration Group and the International Dialogue on Migration. The latter serves to broade i the scope of discussions by including important actors such as the World Trade Organization, which is increasingly interested in the issue of the economic fallout of labour mobility.

Given the importance of the impressive development of regional consultative processes, Haiti will spare no effort to strengthen both its presence at and its active participation in such processes. To that end, my Government warmly welcomes the efforts being made to strengthen cooperation in regional consultative processes. Such cooperation should facilitate participation by Haiti and other key countries that are sources of migratory movement by substantially overcoming the stumbling block of the language barrier, which is a genuine restraint on integration.

Ultimately, this High-level Dialogue offers us all — countries of origin, transit and destination — a historic opportunity to assume collective responsibility for the issue of migration. My country is honoured by the massive participation of States in these meetings. Haiti earnestly hopes that this Dialogue will serve as a catalyst for a modern and innovative debate on international migration that respects human rights and

creates mutual benefits for countries of origin and destination.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Nicholas Schmit, Minister Delegate for Foreign Affairs and Immigration of Luxembourg.

Mr. Schmit (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to thank all those — in particular the Secretary-General — who have taken the initiative in arranging this High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. I should also like to congratulate Peter Sutherland on his report, which has the great merit of presenting an overview of all the major aspects of migration. It should enable us to better organize our cooperation in this area.

The beginning of this dialogue within the United Nations among countries of origin, transit and destination is a positive and promising signal. We all have in mind the tragic scenes that take place every day in the Mediterranean, the Atlantic or elsewhere. Those untenable situations require that we search together for both short-term and lasting solutions.

At the Rabat Conference, held in July 2006 by the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco, countries of Africa, Northern Africa and Europe came together to establish a partnership among all parties to better organize migration flows so as to curb clandestine migration — which in a few months has claimed thousands of lives of young people fleeing poverty — and to strengthen a North-South partnership aimed at re-launching economic and social development to eliminate the causes of such migration, which is prompted by despair. We now have the opportunity to develop a global partnership to make migration a true source of enrichment both for countries of origin and reception and for migrants themselves.

My country, Luxembourg, is a country of immigration, because immigrants represent 40 per cent of our population. We are aware of the essential contribution made by immigration to our economic and social development. But we are also aware that migration cannot be successful without an active integration policy in host countries.

Closer surveillance of borders, a better-coordinated combat against criminal networks which encourage clandestine immigration and clandestine work and which shamefully profit from them are without doubt necessary, but they cannot by themselves do away altogether with clandestine and uncontrolled migratory flows. We need medium- and long-term action to eradicate poverty, which is the real root cause of this type of migration. That is how effective management of migratory flows can contribute to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

In this regard, we must strengthen the frameworks for bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation, providing appropriate instruments and financial resources to make regular and legal migration an instrument of development. In this regard, the issue of financial remittances, the brain drain and migrant rights are essential. The European Union is incorporating all of these issues relating to migration in its foreign policies, as the President of the Union mentioned in his speech.

Better protection of the most vulnerable migrants, women and children in particular, is absolutely necessary, particularly by effectively combating trafficking in human beings. Respect for human rights is an essential element that must be strengthened in all migration policies.

I would also like to draw attention to the need for an information policy, particularly in the societies of the North, regarding the advantages of legal migration for our ageing societies; that is the most effective way to combat xenophobia, racism, discrimination and exclusion.

Today, my country devotes 0.87 per cent of its gross domestic income to development cooperation. My country would like to participate, above and beyond this Dialogue, to ongoing reflection on the question of migration and development. We support the establishment of a global forum, provided that it is an informal structure which allows for a genuine sharing of experiences, as proposed by the Secretary-General. We must commend Belgium, which has already expressed its readiness to host the first meeting of such a Forum in 2007.

Now, we must draw the correct conclusions from the Dialogue that we have conducted over these two days in New York. We must now enrich and better coordinate our policies, better organize our cooperation and make our policies more coherent in the interest of our countries, both of the North and of the South, in the interest of our societies and, most important, in the interest of migrants.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Sergiy Rudyk, Minister, Head of the Committee on Nationalities and Migration of Ukraine.

Mr. Rudyk (Ukraine): At the outset, Madam President, let me, on behalf of the Government of Ukraine, congratulate you and, through you, Secretary-General Kofi Annan, on the timely organization of this very important Dialogue. I hope that our deliberations during these two days will contribute significantly to the development both of the countries where migrants come from and of those where they arrive.

My delegation wishes to align itself with the statement made by Ms. Tarja Filatov of Finland on behalf of the European Union. We have carefully examined the Secretary-General's comprehensive report on international migration and development (A/60/871). In our view, it addresses the core of the issues. We agree that migration and development are interrelated and that the international community should foster cooperation in this field to make better use of the development potential of migration.

Let me elaborate on Ukraine's experience with the migration process and with related constraints. Due to its geopolitical situation, Ukraine has a high level of migration. One can observe that Ukraine is both a country of origin and a destination for international migration and has become a crossroads of migratory movements from East to West, South to North and back. According to United Nations data, my country occupies fourth place in the number of international migrants.

During its 15 years of independence, Ukraine has passed through three important periods of international migration. At the beginning of the 1990s, a great number of Ukrainian nationals went abroad for permanent residence. At the end of the last century, the process of stabilization took place, and currently we are observing a positive balance in migratory movement. At the very beginning, we lacked experience in the area of migration management. For the first time, we faced such phenomena as asylum seekers, refugees, illegal migrants and guest workers. Today, Ukraine has acceded to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees. Since 2002, Ukraine has been a full member of the International Organization for Migration.

But a lot remains to be done. With the European Union now bordering Ukraine, migration movements are likely to grow, and this defines Ukraine as a country with mixed streams of migrants. That reality has encouraged the Government of Ukraine to introduce measures that would diminish illegal immigration. Monitoring the migration process and possible participation in the system to prevent illegal migration are the main priorities of relevant Government institutions. Guidelines and procedures have been established in accordance with international practice on applications for refugee status. Close to 2,300 individuals have already received such status in Ukraine.

As far as migration from Ukraine is concerned, it primarily involves those who are seeking better jobs. According to data that have not been officially confirmed, many millions of Ukrainians are currently working abroad, while the official data show that there are only 56,000. That is a clear indication of a further need to facilitate legal migration in cooperation between countries of origin and receiving countries in order to reduce irregular or illegal immigration. With the assistance of the European Union, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration, Ukraine is successfully implementing programmes to develop institutional capacity for migration management, the main purpose of which is its development of migration services in Ukraine in keeping with international humanitarian standards. The establishment of the Immigration Service of Ukraine is ongoing.

In conclusion, let me commend the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Peter Sutherland, for the role he has played in this area. We welcome the decision to extend his mandate. We hope that this Dialogue will contribute to a better understanding of world migration processes and the need for collective coordinated efforts, both on the national and the regional level. As Secretary-General Kofi Annan told us this morning, "It is now time to turn to the evidence" (*A/61/PV.3*).

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Tarsis Bazana Kabwegyere, MP, Minister of Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees of Uganda.

Mr. Kabwegyere (Uganda): Madam President, I take this opportunity to join in congratulating you on the assumption of your important role.

Uganda takes cognizance of the well-developed manual, the International Agenda for Migration Management, to which my country contributed during the global consultative process at the regional level and under the Berne Initiative. What are now needed are comprehensive and coherent global policies to manage international migration.

Why do we need comprehensive and coherent global polices to manage international migration? As the labour market has become increasingly global, labour migration has become a key means of accomplishing essential business objectives, such as addressing labour market shortages. Improved mechanisms are needed to better match global labour supply and demand in ways that maximize the societal and human development potential of global labour mobility.

The need to invest in human resource development has taken on international significance as a result of increasing labour mobility. Ensuring that labour movements are safe, humane, legal and orderly is in the inherent interest of stakeholders, including individual migrants, Governments, countries of origin and destination, the private sector and civil society. The regulatory framework for migration needs to be made more transparent. A centralized information source on national and regional migration legislation, regulations and administrative requirements would benefit all stakeholders. Remittances have become a significant source of global finance and a potential driver of economic growth in developing countries like Uganda.

With respect to our own experience in migration management, internal displacement caused by rebel activity in northern Uganda brought various challenges, including protected camps to guard the people from abductions and forced recruitment. Today, we are in peace talks with the rebels in Juba in the southern Sudan to end that conflict peacefully so that people can return home from internally displaced persons camps and engage in production and self-determination.

Uganda has put in place progressive refugee legislation that can now allow refugees to live dignified lives by accessing land, produce, and work and to enjoy all the accruing rights. We have also been actively involved in regional efforts to resolve the displacement of people in the Great Lakes region, in particular through Uganda's chairmanship of the successfully completed Burundi peace talks, in southern Sudan under the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, and through our efforts in Somalia.

The Constitution of Uganda has been amended to allow Ugandans who have acquired other citizenship to remain Ugandans — in other words, we have allowed dual citizenship under the Constitution. We have also set up a unit in the Ministry of Labour to handle the externalization of labour. Regulations have been developed and endorsed by the Government to guide that process, where we have surplus labour.

Through the East African Community, with support from the United States Government, we have, through the International Organization for Migration, implemented a migration management programme in which labour officials have acquired related training and have been provided with small, necessary equipment to handle migration. The project also lays down a framework for a comprehensive review of migration legislation.

Our commitment to and support for the establishment of an East African federation to guarantee free movement of people, goods, and services as the region develops into a one-citizenship country will ease free movement of people.

In conclusion, we badly need capacity-building and positive programmes that can bring us all together at an effective level of global migration management. But, above all, we need a total review of the global economy in order to understand why international migration has become such a big problem.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Juma Alifa Ngasongwa, Minister for Planning, Economy and Empowerment of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Mr. Ngasongwa (United Republic of Tanzania): At the outset, Madam, let me congratulate you on your election as President of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly and assure you of my delegation's full support.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the Minister of Home Affairs of South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania welcomes this High-level Dialogue on migration and the opportunity it has provided for putting the issue of migration and development on the international agenda. We welcome the reports prepared by the Secretary-General for this Dialogue. The reports have provided us with a wealth of information on this matter. The recommendations contained therein provide a basis for our deliberations and material for further discussions. My Government welcomes the recommendation made in the Secretary-General's report (A/60/871) for a consultative forum on migration. However, more discussions are needed on the establishment of this forum and the form it should take in view of the ongoing reforms of the United Nations.

Migration is an old historical phenomenon with varied causes and consequences. The current rising trend of migration can be attributed to many factors, including rapid globalization, advances in transport, communication and technology, deteriorating political, social and environmental conditions, demographic factors and armed conflicts. The patterns of migration flows are mixed, complex and challenging. We should also point out that internal national migration is equally challenging to policymakers and adds complexity to the phenomenon of international migration.

Migrants are not a homogenous group; migrants may have the same basic needs, but they also have needs that are specific to their groupings, which need to be addressed accordingly in managing international migration.

For my Government, international migration and development is a new area that we are trying to understand and cope with. The Government, with support from the International Organization for Migration, initiated a project in 2004 on Migration for Development in Tanzania. A preliminary assessment has been undertaken, and the Government is now working on the issues raised in the study. The management of migration requires a coordinated, multisectoral approach and compliance with international human rights standards and practice. In that regard, we wish to emphasize the importance of international cooperation and support in capacity-building, especially in the following areas. First is the promotion of policy coherence on migration issues and sector development policies, since migration cuts across various sectors. We need also to explore the mainstreaming of migration into poverty reduction and employment creation strategies.

The second area is that of advocacy and communication of information on safe and legal migration such that migration is a result of informed choice and not a survival strategy and that it occurs in conditions of dignity.

The third area is the prevention and elimination of smuggling in persons, especially women and children. And fourthly, the promotion of respect for the human rights of migrant workers and their families.

The volume of the remittances transmitted by migrant workers and the benefits of those remittances to their home communities have been widely recognized. Their positive impact on individual household income can be significant, but it cannot replace official development assistance. We must look simultaneously into ways to enhance the productive use of remittances as well as to reduce the cost of sending such funds.

While we cannot prevent migration, my Government is also concerned about both the issue of the brain drain caused by the migration of skilled workers and the "brain waste" produced when skilled migrants are not utilized efficiently. We encourage the effective engagement of diasporas in contributing to the development of their countries of origin. We also encourage the transfer of technology from receiving to sending countries.

While it is widely recognized that, when properly managed, migration is beneficial to both sending and receiving communities, we note also that there is an information gap on many aspects of the linkage between migration and development. We would therefore urge more collaboration and cooperation among nations to gain and share knowledge and skills that will assist in the development of policies and regulations that will govern the many aspects and dimensions of migration in a way that will bring about a win-win situation for migrants, their countries of origin and the States that receive them.

Let me conclude by saying that international migration is a phenomenon that is here to stay and that, as managing migration goes beyond a country's boundaries, what is needed is concerted efforts among us to address the root causes of migration and to

provide an environment where migration is freely undertaken in a safe, informed and dignified manner and with full respect for human rights. My country is committed to work with the international community in that endeavour.

The President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Atgul Ryskulova, Chairperson of the State Committee on Migration and Employment of Kyrgyzstan.

Mrs. Ryskulova (Kyrgyzstan) (*spoke in Russian*): First and foremost, allow me, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, to express our sincere gratitude to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for the successful organization of this meeting. I also wish to thank Mr. Brunson McKinley, Director General of the International Organization for Migration, for the consistent support given to the development of migration policy in our country.

This High-level Dialogue on Migration and Development is very important, as it offers an opportunity to outline our future efforts in that regard.

The regulation of migration processes is currently one of the main policy issues for all States. The domestic and foreign policies of all countries are based on economic values and indicators that are in turn closely linked to migration and development issues. Increasingly, developing countries have begun to pursue determined and well-designed policies, to introduce legislation and to establish bodies to deal with processes associated with the regulation of migration. Like any other country developing under the rules of a market economy, Kyrgyzstan has experienced all sorts of migration.

Kyrgyzstan's geopolitical situation — including its proximity to countries with unstable political environments — as well as the military campaigns to our south and general domestic unemployment have influenced priorities in the regulation of migration processes in Kyrgyzstan. A clear State policy on migration is currently in effect in the Kyrgyz Republic, which is being implemented by the newly established State Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic for Migration and Employment. We believe that policy in this area should be based on recognition of the fact that migration is an objective process. In that context, our primary aim is to serve the interests of the individual, society and the State as a whole.

In our work, we believe it is necessary to emphasize the positive consequences and potential of migration, including its positive impact on the balance of payments, domestic labour markets, the reduction of poverty, cultural enrichment and the transfer of labour know-how and skills when the migrants return home, to name but a few aspects.

Unfortunately, Kyrgyzstan has recently faced a number of problems related to migration, primarily those associated with protecting the rights and legal interests of migrants and members of their families in countries of destination. The Government has taken certain bold steps aimed at creating an international treaty basis for migration, providing advice and information to migrants about their rights and establishing expatriate communities, cultural centres and centres to provide legal protection.

The time has come to enhance support for migrants who remit funds in a legal and advantageous manner, through intergovernmental and inter-bank agreements aimed at reducing transaction costs. Other problems must still be addressed, including how to more effectively utilize migrants' remittances in order to help them start small businesses and to invest in family budgets and education. I believe this will be difficult without the assistance and experience of international and financial institutions, especially the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic has significant collaboration with the IOM in managing the migration process, capacity-building and development of legislation. IOM and Kyrgyzstan are also working on a new concept of migration policy that will reflect major global trends and make use of the world's experience in that regard.

One of the main tenets of international migration is that the State has the capacity to control and regulate border crossings. That, however, does not constitute an absolute mandate, for it must adhere to the human right to travel freely and the commitments of States set out in various international agreements and treaties.

Acknowledging the commitment of the Kyrgyz Republic to the fundamental principles and norms of international law, our Government is making every effort to ensure the rights of all categories of migrants. Our Government is providing assistance to persons displaced involuntarily, refugees, persons seeking

Kyrgyz citizenship and persons of Kyrgyz origin who have chosen to live abroad.

I hope that this meeting will lead to a constructive dialogue that sheds light on the various issues related to the legal and institutional context of the management of migration processes and of population flows. I also hope that we will endeavour to identify priorities for the future development of migration policies among the countries represented here.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Zhazbeck Abdiyev, Vice-Minister and Chairperson of the Committee on Migration, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Abdiyev (Kazakhstan) (*spoke in Russian*): Migration is a phenomenon that has for quite some time not received much attention. We are today gradually beginning to appreciate the need to manage migration flows for the sake of the development of countries of origin and destination alike. Societies must focus efforts towards resolving the problems of the reintegration of migrants and enhancing the protection of their rights in countries of destination. Of no less importance is the gender aspect of migration. As is well known, women migrants are more vulnerable and face greater risks and discrimination than men.

Unfortunately, human trafficking, slavery and sexual exploitation continue to be burning issues on the global agenda. Measures to eradicate those scourges of the contemporary world should include improving the economic and social situation of vulnerable sectors of the population. We must also strengthen international and State cooperation in that area. The protection and rehabilitation of the victims of trafficking are extremely important components in combating this type of transnational crime. No less important is the need to punish those who traffic in human beings, as well as the need for agencies that deal with this issue to put in place stricter controls.

As a country of destination, transit and origin of migrants, Kazakhstan devotes particular attention to problems involving illegal, ethnic and labour migration and the protection of the rights of migrant workers. The migration policy of my country includes the following priorities.

One of our policies is to liberalize the migration regime, protect rights and freedoms on the basis of the rule of law and to observe strict compliance with the norms of international law. We also seek to create conditions for the return of ethnic Kazakhs — Oralmans — to their native land, as well as to utilize external labour migration to attract highly skilled workers.

The Government of Kazakhstan is strengthening its national migration legislation and implementing a national migration policy programme. Work is under way to develop a new concept of migration policy that will incorporate international best practices adapted to our conditions.

This year, my country became the first country of the Commonwealth of Independent States to carry out a pilot campaign to legalize illegal migrant workers. That effort has allowed migrant workers to register with local migration agencies.

An interdepartmental working group has been working since February to develop and implement migration policy. The group includes representatives from the International Organization for Migration and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Kazakhstan is party to bilateral treaties and multilateral conventions that directly or indirectly protect the rights of migrants. Our country is also working closely with the relevant international organizations and United Nations agencies in this area.

Kazakhstan hopes that the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development will significantly contribute to identifying trends in international migration and its effects on development. Migration issues transcend all existing borders between States. It is important to identify ways to successfully and effectively manage migration for development. The global agenda should include among its priorities such issues as economic growth, human development, the creation of decent jobs in developing countries, gender equality, the protection of the rights of migrants and finding solutions to the problems of labour migration, illegal migration, human trafficking, migrant health care, HIV/AIDS and the brain drain.

We believe that, if properly managed, migration can be mutually beneficial and hold out great potential for the development of the countries of destination, transit and origin. The problems of migration can be solved. Further open dialogue and closer cooperation at

the bilateral, regional and global levels can guarantee the success of that noble endeavour.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Hans Winkler, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Austria.

Mr. Winkler (Austria): Austria fully subscribes to the statement delivered by the representative of Finland on behalf of the European Union (EU).

At the outset, I would like to express our gratitude to Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Mr. Peter Sutherland, his Special Representative for the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, for their inspiration, for getting their priorities right and for the substantial preparatory work they devoted to this event, along with Member States and non-governmental actors throughout the world.

Migration issues have been at the top of the political agenda for years. Yet policies comprising both migration and the development aid dimension, and designed to create a positive impact on the ground, are still very urgently needed. Our endeavour here at the global level has to be underpinned by concrete action at the regional and subregional levels, where tailor-made solutions can be worked out.

In July 2006, the Euro-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development, held in Rabat, brought together for the first time countries of origin, transit and destination along the migration routes from western, central and northern Africa to Europe, as well as regional and international organizations. In the years to come, the implementation of the action plan that was agreed at Rabat will have a concrete impact on the ground, which is urgently needed to better manage migratory flows and to prevent humanitarian disasters, which we have all witnessed in the Mediterranean and eastern Atlantic.

At the same time, the EU has always underlined that a continent-wide approach to migration is needed. We look forward to the holding of a pan-African conference on migration under the aegis of the Commission of the African Union (AU). We believe that those processes could inspire work in other regions.

With regard to Austria, migratory flows on the one hand, and a focus on development cooperation on the other, overlap, in particular with regard to several countries in South-East Europe. We are including information on legal migration and on the hazards of illegal migration in our development programmes. We are also looking into the potential of sizeable diasporas for development cooperation purposes.

This morning, in his very inspiring speech (see A/61/PV.3), the Secretary-General reminded us that, increasingly, countries are tending to be simultaneously countries of origin and countries of destination. In that connection, we must bear in mind that the South-South dimension of migration warrants our particular attention. When requested by partner countries, development cooperation can also contribute towards capacity-building in the area of managing migration for the benefit of all involved, and in the area of preventing trafficking and the smuggling of migrants.

Migrant women, who constitute half of all international migrants worldwide and make valuable and social and economic contributions to sending and host countries alike, are facing double discrimination all over the world — as women and as migrants. We therefore strongly believe that a gender perspective should be incorporated into all migration policies and strategies.

An effective and fruitful dialogue starts by exploring and understanding each other's positions. It is crucial to gain such mutual understanding of the causes and effects of migration, as well as of its impact in terms of development. The links between migration and development are complex. But I believe that, when managed effectively, migration can create a win-win situation that may have a substantial positive impact on all parties involved.

Austria shares the view expressed by many delegations that the issue of follow-up is crucial. Austria will therefore be an active participant in our common work in progress, which will make sure that this increasingly important topic remains on the international agenda. The Dialogue must continue, and we support all proposals that will keep it alive without building new bureaucratic structures.

In conclusion, I should like to say that I was particularly impressed by the metaphor used in the Secretary-General's report on international migration and development (A/60/871), namely, that of the migrant as a human link between cultures and societies. Could we easily think of a function more important than that of creating links between cultures and societies currently in grave danger of being torn

apart by the strong centrifugal tendencies that are emerging as reactions to the very process of globalization."

The President: I now call on Her Excellency Ms. Marta Altolaguirre, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guatemala.

Ms. Altolaguirre (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin my statement by thanking the Secretariat on behalf of the Government of Guatemala for so efficiently organizing this High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. I am of the view that this topic is extremely important in an increasingly globalized world. I would also like to express our thanks to the Secretary-General for his report (A/60/871) on the topic under discussion and to congratulate him on the preparatory events that have opened our minds to discussing and reviewing the phenomenon of migration and its impact on development which, I am sure, will contribute to ensuring that this High-level Dialogue is a success.

Guatemala shares the views expressed during the statements made by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Rio Group.

My delegation has particular interest in international migration, since Guatemala, although principally a country of origin, is also a country of transit and destination. Central America in general is a highly mobile region, particularly towards the North. Guatemala is of the view that international migration has been a shared and constant phenomenon throughout human history and that it has become more complex and more intense as time passes and with the development of technology. Such movements should never be criminalized; they should be understood from the ethical and the political perspectives. I should note that in our region people are no longer emigrating to flee from conflict; they are driven by a natural desire to seek better opportunities.

Migration is the outcome of the right to freedom of movement and of considered decisions by individuals, but also of the need satisfactorily to provide for their families. In addition, it is the result of an increasing trend among young people, who, with their considerable energy and desire for advancement, are attracted by better earning opportunities beyond their borders.

We should also highlight the increasing number of women who decide to leave their communities and, in the process, encounter all types of risks, including sexual exploitation and, more broadly speaking, trafficking in persons. Like men, they leave in search of better opportunities, but they also leave to meet pressing family needs and responsibilities.

The subject of transborder relations is particularly important, because these affect many young people in their desire to achieve family reunification abroad. Regionally, in Central America, meetings have been held to coordinate protection mechanisms for children and to ensure safe repatriation of minors.

Clearly, international migration responds to the demand for workers, receiving countries' labour needs, and the inability of societies of origin to create sufficient jobs. It is also clear that the governance of this migration requires unified and rational cooperation among States. These comments are just some examples that show that international migration is a fact that is a responsibility that all of us should assume in a comprehensive manner. Like Guatemala, all countries can be or have been societies of origin, transit or destination at some time in their history.

Guatemala welcomes the endeavour at this High-level Dialogue to understand the relationship between international migration and development, and to remedy the limitations that exist in many countries of origin. We consider that the concept of co-development set out by the Secretary-General in his report is a challenge that should be further considered. International migration can contribute to development in our countries, but it is our shared responsibility to ensure that this development takes place in a stable and sustainable manner.

It is crucial that we put an end to forced migration, whether it be caused by instability or by lack of opportunities. That responsibility lies mainly with the countries of origin, but there is a universal obligation to protect the human rights of every person, and that obligation must be met by all. It is also worth mentioning that it is only through rational cooperation among countries of origin, transit and destination that we will be able effectively to combat the trafficking and smuggling of individuals.

In short, we must always consider this issue from the human perspective.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Pracha Guna-Kasem, Senior Adviser to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand.

Mr. Guna-Kasem (Thailand): Thailand wishes to express its appreciation for the report of the Secretary-General (A/60/871) on international migration and development, which highlights the interconnection between these two issues, as well as the question of how this phenomenon can benefit countries, be they countries of origin, transit or destination of migrants. We also welcome the report of the Global Commission on International Migration, which provides a comprehensive overview of international migration in various parts of the world and proposes a substantive list of useful recommendations on effective migration management.

Thailand is, all in one, a country of origin, transit and destination. We have thus accumulated a great deal of experience and many lessons, both positive and negative, on migration issues. I would like to share with members some of our thoughts on migration issues.

First, Thailand believes that international migration is overall a positive global phenomenon that, if properly managed, can enrich societies and cultures and contribute significantly to economic growth and development in both countries of origin and countries of destination. It is on this premise that the Royal Thai Government in 2004 embarked on a regularization scheme for approximately 2 million illegal migrant workers from neighbouring countries who were already present in Thailand. This has resulted in 1.3 million migrant workers being registered and in most of them being issued work permits which entitle them to access to basic health services. On the outbound front, the Government has been facilitating Thai nationals seeking legal employment opportunities abroad by providing, for example, many pre-departure training programmes to develop workers' skills necessary to meet the demands of labour markets abroad.

Secondly, we are of the view that rights-based and victim-centred approaches are essential to any migration management efforts, since people on irregular migration, especially women and children, are highly vulnerable to being trafficked and abused. In that regard, Thailand has attached great importance to intensifying efforts to protect the fundamental human rights and human dignity of migrants, irrespective of their documentation status. Migrant workers are empowered to exercise their rights and to have access to resources and remedies through the information, training and education provided by the Thai Government. We have also been promoting legal practices regarding the recruitment of migrant workers, and ensuring access to effective legal remedies for migrants.

Thirdly, we share the views of many previous speakers that multidimensional aspects of international migration and development must be taken into account when formulating an effective national migration policy. International migration is linked with diverse policy issues including development, human rights, human security, trade and health, as well as national security concerns. Therefore, a coherent, comprehensive and integrated migration policy involving multiple stakeholders is crucial to attaining our mutual goal of maximizing the benefits of international migration, and minimizing its negative effects.

Fourthly, international migration cannot be managed effectively in isolation from international cooperation, simply because it involves more than one country and concerns more than one global issue. Thailand fully recognizes the importance of partnership, capacity-building and the sharing of the best practices at all levels, particularly the bilateral and regional levels.

We have played an active role in the regional consultative and cooperation frameworks, namely, the Intergovernmental Asia-Pacific Consultations on Refugees, Displaced Persons and Migrants; the Regional Ministerial Conference on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime, or the Bali Process; and the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking. We have initiated and concluded several bilateral memorandums of understanding with countries in the Mekong subregion to address migration-related problems, for example, the memorandums of understanding with Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic on Bilateral Cooperation for Eliminating Trafficking in Children and Women and Assisting Victims of Trafficking, and the memorandums of understanding with Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar on Cooperation in the Employment of Workers.

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Lastly, Thailand supports the Secretary-General's proposal to consider the possibility of developing a global consultative process within the United Nations, with the active participation of all stakeholders, to maintain the dialogue on international migration after this High-level Dialogue. We hope that the proposed mechanism would effectively serve as a potential intergovernmental forum to sustain the momentum of political will and develop the basis for future cooperation on international migration laid by this High-level Dialogue.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Kiyohiko Toyama, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan.

Mr. Toyama (Japan): I would like to begin by congratulating you, Madam, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session. Let me take this opportunity to assure you that you have the Government of Japan's full support as you lead the General Assembly in addressing the challenges facing the United Nations.

It is essential that every society be fair in the way it receives and treats people from other countries. Societies should promote cultural diversity and strive for openness, flexibility and more mobile workforces. Migrants, in turn, can contribute to the development of their countries of origin by gaining skills and engaging in economic activity. Many issues must be resolved, however, in order for international migration to be of benefit to migrants and their countries of origin and destination. Not only must countries make efforts within their national frameworks, but they must also engage in international cooperation. This High-level Dialogue is therefore most timely, and, on behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to thank the United Nations for its initiative in convening it.

The preamble to the Constitution of Japan states that "[we] recognize that all peoples of the world have the right to live in peace, free from fear and want". That is the basis of the idea of human security that Japan has been promoting with a view to protecting people and giving them the power to protect themselves.

Japan believes that, in the interest of human security for all people, it is important to combine the following two approaches to international migration; first, we must protect people who have been forced to leave their homes because of threats to their welfare and also empower them, enabling them to better withstand adversity. Second, we must protect people migrating in search of better lives, and create environments where they can realize their potential in accordance with the laws and regulations of countries of destination. Taking action on both of these fronts is the basic precondition for creating a positive link between migration and development, paying particular attention to the needs of women, children and other vulnerable members of society.

Allow me to expand on this idea. Japan has implemented numerous projects in other countries aimed at empowering communities where people have been forced to flee their homes because of conflicts, natural disasters, human trafficking, organized crime and other major threats to their safety. Those projects, which include aid for refugees and victims of human trafficking, as well as advocacy activities, are being conducted with financial and technical assistance from Japan and financing from the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, established in 1999 as the result of a Japanese initiative to help United Nations agencies carry out activities in this area.

In addition, Japan is implementing its Action Plan of Measures to Combat Trafficking in Persons, adopted in 2004 in the areas of prevention, law enforcement and protection. Japan is also exchanging views with Governments, non-governmental organizations and international organizations in Asia, Europe and Latin America to pursue effective ways of preventing human trafficking. Japan is also actively participating in the Bali Process, a regional framework in Asia and the Pacific to help combat illegal immigration, human smuggling and trafficking and related transnational crimes.

Migrants can contribute to the development of both their country of origin and their country of destination through their economic activity, their technical skills and capital they can provide. In order to realize such a win-win situation, however, migrants should abide by the laws of their countries of origin, transit and destination, under which they should at the same time be afforded due protection. Moreover, international cooperation to support the development of the capacity of each individual is necessary for migrants to obtain the maximum benefit from migration.

For those reasons, Japan has extended cooperation to developing countries with a view to enhancing human resources in education and health. For example, Japan has offered assistance for training teachers and improving teaching manuals, curricula and textbooks. In the health sector, this cooperation has taken the form of training medical and counselling staff engaged in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

In addition, for over 40 years the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers have been sent to developing countries to participate at the grass-roots level in community- and nation-building efforts. On the basis of this experience, Japan has just launched, in cooperation with the United Nations Volunteers, an Asian youth volunteers programme for Africa to promote an exchange of volunteers between the two continents.

The issue of international migration and development is a critical global challenge. Japan therefore regards this High-level Dialogue as a significant step for all of us. After it has concluded, we, the international community, will need to deepen our dialogue and strengthen our cooperation. Japan is committed to working towards both of those ends.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. João Gomes Cravinho, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Portugal.

Mr. Cravinho (Portugal): Allow me at the outset, Madam President, to congratulate you on your recent election, and to wish you every success as you carry out your lofty responsibilities.

I would like to align myself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Finland on behalf of the Presidency of the European Union. For Portugal, this is a uniquely important opportunity for us to contribute some additional views that are of particular relevance to us.

This year has witnessed a number of international gatherings devoted to the theme of migration, gatherings held in the cities of Brussels, Turin and, most important, in July, in Rabat. Today and tomorrow we are taking another step in this international dialogue, and before the year is out we will have had further opportunities to take the discussion forward.

In these meetings, it has become clear that, despite controversies and divergences of opinion, we can identify important lines of consensus. The first concerns the urgent need to address migration in a shared and responsible way, since the issue will not simply disappear if it is ignored. Secondly, stable and effective responses cannot be merely national; they must be based upon international approaches, at the regional and global levels, focusing both on South-North and on South-South migration flows. The third line of consensus is that sustainable responses must be multidimensional and coherent, involving the management of migration flows, the integration of migrant communities and the promotion of development.

We believe that these lines of convergence constitute a valuable starting point for our discussions. The Secretary-General's report in connection with this High-level Dialogue (A/60/871) states, in paragraph 59, that "Governments understand that their citizens working abroad can be development assets and are strengthening ties with them." In this regard, we should also recognize, as part of the growing consensus, the importance of the great potential of diaspora organizations as an instrument of development for countries of origin. In addition to this, we believe — on the basis of our own historical experience — that the positive impact that remittances can have upon developing countries should also be included in this consensus.

Portugal recognizes that the linkages between international migration and development are complex. Globalization poses great challenges for the management of migration flows. But it is clear that migration, when managed effectively, can make enormous contributions, both to the host country and to the country of origin. It is important to bear this in mind as we develop our policy responses. Indeed, migratory flows have been a widespread and very positive phenomenon in human history, and we must not fall into the trap of promoting policies that focus on a single aspect of migration, whatever the pressures resulting from unbalanced media portrayals may be.

Migration flows must be managed in such a way that the awarding of entry clearance for a migrant should always be synchronized with integration measures that prevent social exclusion, while reinforcing fair treatment under the law for migrants and their families, for example in terms of access to education, health care and employment within national systems.

From the development perspective, it is important to focus our attention on the poorest countries, especially those in Africa. In this context, we attach great importance to supporting capacity in the fields of institution-building, peacebuilding, conflict prevention, human rights, democracy and the rule of law and poverty eradication. The lack of such capacity in many countries is one of the root causes of migration.

Again, according to the Secretary-General's report and to civil society hearings in the context of this High-level Dialogue, the integration of immigrants must play a key role within national and regional policies. The effective integration of migrant workers within globalized labour markets is critical. Migrant communities should be able to feel at home and to enjoy their rights, as well as fulfilling their duties. But they should also be given space to preserve their identities and keep their roots alive.

In my country, we have been experiencing substantial growth in migration flows and its diversification in terms of quality, which poses a very interesting challenge for our society, as well as providing a valuable opportunity. Our role as a host country for migrants — after many decades of being a country of origin — has led us to engage in coordination efforts within various sectors of public policy that have an impact upon migration.

We are currently in the process of adopting a global and integrated migration policy that highlights the social, economic and cultural advantages of the phenomenon without ignoring the challenges involved. We are working towards promoting various forms of legal immigration, with a view to further discouraging illicit entry.

This new legislation being promoted by the Portuguese Government is giving special consideration to issues of flexibility related to "circular migration" flows and temporary migration visas.

It also gives attention to repressing the violence resulting from all forms of trafficking in human beings, which affects women and children in particular. The new migration law intensifies prevention efforts by focusing on illegal recruitment networks and traffic in human beings, while at the same time implementing measures to provide support to the victims. As we all know, development cannot be achieved at the expense of human rights.

In our view, it is essential to have appropriate statistical mechanisms to assess numbers, as well as the capacity to analyse, interpret and use such data. We recently created an observatory of migration movements among the Portuguese-speaking countries. The main objective of the project is to promote better knowledge of migratory realities in all the countries involved by sharing legislative and statistical information, undertaking studies in the area of migration and asylum and creating a contact network.

Our interest in these issues will continue to be discussed in Portugal throughout 2006 and 2007. Migrant flows from the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries are still very significant. For historical reasons, those countries are also the main recipients of Portuguese development assistance. In recognition of this link, in June we organized a seminar with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on the role of the Portuguese-speaking diaspora in promoting development in their countries of origin. In October, Lisbon will also be hosting the important Metropolis Conference, on the special theme "Paths and Crossroads: Moving People, Changing Places".

Another new step is that Portugal and Cape Verde are in the process of institutionalizing a joint working group designed to define common strategies that are appropriate for the specificity of Cape Verde and immigration in Portugal, which is also a transit country for Cape Verde and immigrants to other countries. In short, the group will address the issues pertaining to migration and its multiple components.

On the issue of remittances, which are private flows, we believe that more research can be done about their contribution to the development of countries of origin. Portugal has promoted a research study on remittances with the Inter-American Development Bank, and we have further work in the pipeline on that important issue, with other partners.

Allow me to end with a reference to two pivotal arenas of dialogue on migration in which we shall invest strongly over the coming year. The first concerns the dialogue between Europe and Africa, which is an extremely appropriate framework for placing migration issues within the broader context of a strengthened EU-Africa partnership. We are therefore working hard towards the next EU-Africa Summit.

Furthermore, and bearing in mind that the High-level Dialogue is part of a continuing process, we

consider it important to give continuity to our work over these two days and to find the best ways of keeping the topic on the international agenda. Thus, my Government will avail itself of the opportunity of holding the Portuguese Presidency of the European Union, during the second semester of 2007, to make sure that migration remains at the forefront of our attention.

The President: I give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Judit Fazekas Lèvaynè, State Secretary of the Ministry of Justice of Hungary.

Mrs. Lèvaynè (Hungary): Hungary would like to express its pleasure in seeing the present High-level Dialogue taking place as a result of the thorough preparatory work of United Nations Member States. We believe it is both desirable and useful to launch a multifaceted international coordination process in the wake of this event of high symbolic importance. As a part of the process, we support every constructive joint elaboration of ideas and approaches at the bilateral, regional and, where appropriate, international community level.

We believe that a major task of the follow-up process is to boost the efficiency of cooperation among international organizations working with migration. Hungary therefore welcomes the creation of the Global Migration Group, as an initiative integrating migration and development organizations.

International migration is a remarkably diversified and dynamically changing phenomenon. Hence, Hungary's role in migration flows has been changing over the past one and a half decades — since its transition from a communist country to a parliamentary democracy. During that period, Hungary changed from a country producing migrants — and during the middle of the twentieth century, also refugees — to a country essentially of transit and receiving. Today, Hungary is at the crossroads of two of the four main migration routes leading to the EU: the East and the South-East migration routes. Hungary has very positive experiences regarding regional initiatives and intergovernmental forms of cooperation dealing with migration. We support a multi-faceted international coordination process and the elaboration of an international consultative forum based on the cooperation of Governments.

We are happy to work closely with all United Nations Member States to cooperate on the idea of a global migration forum. We strongly believe that an international structure involving interested United Nations Member States can build on the extremely important experiences of regional consultative processes. However, Hungary cannot support the creation of another agency or organization; instead, we encourage further cooperation of already existing international organizations and regional initiatives.

It was our pleasure to host the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM) Regional Hearing for Europe in November 2004. I would like to take the opportunity to thank the members of the Global Commission and the staff of the GCIM secretariat for their great work performed during the elaboration of the GCIM report and thereafter.

Migration issues are related to several policy areas of outstanding importance. Those areas include, among others, poverty alleviation, state sovereignty, individual fundamental rights, global economy and employment, environment issues and health and security. It is hardly possible to cover all the connections to those areas in a high-level discussion such as the present one.

This High-level Dialogue has to deal with both horizontal and more technical issues. However, it is of great importance to focus primarily on the practical aspects of the positive connection between migration and development. Hence, we believe it is essential to cover enhancement of the development impact of migrant remittances, sharing best practices of circular migration schemes and coordination of the follow-up to the present event.

The first discussion of migration issues under the auspices of the United Nations must present all relevant approaches to and aspects of those issues, in order to show the colourful picture of the international migration landscape. Although we are all familiar with the fact that the landscape also includes numerous alarming points, I hope that, by mutual extension of each other's viewpoints, delegations will find ways to use migration and development issues for their common benefit and to produce concrete results as soon as possible.

The President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency The Honourable Teopolina Mushelenga, Deputy Minister of Home Affairs and Immigration of Namibia.

Ms. Mushelenga (Namibia): Madam President, allow me, on behalf of my delegation, to congratulate you on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session. I would like to assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

My delegation is very pleased to participate in the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. This important forum offers Member States an opportunity to address one of the global challenges facing the world today: international migration. We welcome the opportunity to discuss and further reflect on these issues, which have both common and different implications for our countries and, indeed, for the world at large. In that regard, Namibia reiterates its full support for the African Common Position on Migration and Development, adopted in Banjul.

In the same vein, Namibia would like to align itself with the statement made by the Minister of Home Affairs of South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Migration is multifaceted and complex, affecting and affected by human security; economic, social and political developments; gender inequality; and many other processes. Therefore, responses to migration must be comprehensive, contextually appropriate and cognizant of both the contributions and effects of migration in terms of development, security and political stability. It is also important to take into consideration the fact that the majority of migrants worldwide are women and that, in many places, they outnumber male migrants. Gender inequality contributes to the forced migration of, and trafficking in, women and girls.

The foundation of Namibian immigration policy is our desire to promote development with equity and to manage migration in order to ensure that it contributes to our overall development objectives and does not undermine the progress we have made so far. We therefore seek to attract sustainable and suitable investment in the country, to import specific skills and to transfer them to Namibians. We also believe that those who come can learn new skills from us that they will eventually take with them.

We are realists and therefore recognize that an immigration policy in today's world should also address the security concerns of both receiving States and migrants. We will need to find ways to ensure that neither a State's security nor its obligations to guarantee social, economic, security and safety to its citizens are compromised.

We recognize the positive effects that migration can have on the economic development of both countries of origin and countries of destination. However, we are convinced that the migration of skilled persons acts as a drain on a country of origin, because it results in the loss of the investment made in their training. We therefore hope that this High-level Dialogue will provide us with the best ideas to help us formulate policy guidelines that ensure that the "brain gain" in some countries does not mean a "brain drain" in others. In that regard, we recognize the need for more cooperation between States and non-State actors to maximize the development benefits derived from migration. We welcome the participation of the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society in this Dialogue.

Some migration is fuelled by instability and uncertainty. While many are searching for places where economic and social conditions are better, others are simply searching for a place where they can be safe. In the southern African region, the asylum/migration nexus is an increasing problem. Over approximately the past decade and a half, southern Africa has been transformed from a sending region into a receiving region. Namibia, with its long history of United Nations support and its own experience of exile, continues to respect the institution of asylum and refugee rights. At the same time, we seek to promote the voluntary repatriation of those refugees who can return to countries to which stability and peace have now returned. In the near future, we will also look at the issue of the local integration of a yet-to-be-determined number of refugees — long-term residents who no longer have ties to their countries of origin or are unable to return for other reasons and who can contribute to our national development objectives.

Namibia, along with other African countries, has been considering legal and normative frameworks for the promotion of safe and managed migration. An important guiding instrument is the Southern African Development Community Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of Persons. That instrument, however, needs to be buttressed by good practices.

One of the recommendations of a comprehensive study done by the Global Commission on International Migration calls for bilateral agreements as a means to address migration issues that affect two States. In that regard, Namibia has agreements with our neighbouring States Angola and Zambia to allow members of communities along the common border to have freedom of movement within a limited area inside each country, with the simple requirement of a border pass. Such arrangements encourage cross-border trade, cultural exchanges and harmonious relations between and among States.

Finally, Namibia hopes that this Dialogue will be not an end in itself, but the beginning of multilateral discussions that will help the international community to find solutions to this challenging issue. This Dialogue should also look at the capacity of receiving States with a view to helping them better manage the challenges posed by migration. In that regard, the need for technical and humanitarian assistance for developing countries should be recognized and addressed. Namibia accordingly welcomes and supports the proposal of the Secretary-General to establish an international forum for dialogue on migration and development.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Delano Franklyn, Minister of State, Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica.

Mr. Franklyn (Jamaica): It is my special honour to congratulate you, Madam, on your recent election as President of the General Assembly. The United Nations mission to ensure gender parity is clearly bearing fruit.

This Dialogue on migration and development is quite timely, and Jamaica wishes to associate itself from the very outset with the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on this important subject.

Migration policies must be approached in a comprehensive manner, given the multidimensional nature of the phenomenon. We should therefore avoid the growing tendency to focus only on security and border control issues. Other important concerns — such as the human rights of migrants, identifying solutions to the negative impact of the brain drain and enhancing cooperation on issues related to migration and mobility — are among those that should also be given equal treatment.

Over the past four decades, Jamaica has experienced a rate of approximately 20,000 nationals migrating annually. For Jamaica, one of the positive spin-offs of migration is the increase in receipts from remittances, growing from less than $100 million in 1990 to $1.65 billion in 2005. That represents 16 per cent of Jamaica's gross domestic product. Within the same period, poverty was reduced from 28.4 per cent to 14.8 per cent. It can therefore be concluded that in Jamaica there is a direct correlation between the reduction in poverty and the increase in the inflow of remittances.

A strategy is required to maximize the continued increase in the inflow of remittances for national development. I put forward the following policy initiatives for consideration: first, facilitating and stimulating short-term labour migration through bilateral agreements, secondly, decreasing the costs of formal transfers by stimulating more competition in the market, and thirdly, developing creative synergies between banks and microfinance institutions.

Remittances should in no way, however, be seen as a reward for the migration of trained professionals. Such a conclusion would be wrong, since remittances, as significant as they are, cannot adequately replace the loss of skilled human resources.

Jamaica and the other countries of the English-speaking Caribbean have a very high rate of loss of tertiary-level graduates to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development countries. It is estimated at over 60 per cent annually in the case of Jamaica.

In that context, Jamaica supports the proposal for co-development. There is a compelling case to be made for the developed countries to make some financial contribution to developing countries in order to offset some of the costs incurred in the training of those graduates. Co-development partnerships must be linked with an element of training so that local personnel can take over when experts leave.

The growing importance of migration makes it imperative that the rights of migrants be protected. While there are some bilateral agreements which offer such protection, it remains an area of major concern to Jamaica. As a result, steps are currently being taken by the Government of Jamaica to become a party to the International Convention on the Protection of the

Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990).

Gender is also a key dimension of international and regional migration. Men generally dominate initial immigration flows and are later joined by female family members and children. Nearly half of all international migrants are women. The data for the Caribbean is consistent with that finding, where throughout the Caribbean, women represent 52 per cent of all migrants, and men 48 per cent.

The gender transformation arising from emigration is having an impact on family structures and networks. Women are vulnerable to gross abuses and exploitation, particularly those in domestic employment, and are also more likely to suffer gross violations of their rights. The beneficial outcomes of migration for women critically depend on respect for the rights enshrined in the core human rights instruments.

The Jamaican diaspora plays a significant role in national development. The fundamental objective of the Government of Jamaica is to identify and organize members of the Jamaican diaspora in the various countries and develop a permanent and structured link with Jamaica. One element of this is a two-yearly diaspora conference in Jamaica. A second consists in organizing the various communities in the host countries to allow for democratic and accountable representation. Jamaica also has the intention to create a joint select committee of both Houses of Parliament. That initiative will elevate matters relating to the diaspora to the legislative level.

Jamaica is of the view that this High-level Dialogue must not stop here. What is critical, however, is to build on its outcome so that talk can be followed up by action. We strongly recommend that follow-up should promote policy research and analyses on migration and development, with the imperative to formulate and implement appropriate actions.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Isikia Rabiet Savua, chairman of the delegation of Fiji.

Mr. Savua (Fiji): This first multilateral attempt to address the issues of migration and development on a global level should begin with a sustained constructive dialogue and cooperation to identify appropriate ways to accentuate benefits and remove deleterious factors.

Fiji supports meaningful efforts to promote a balanced and comprehensive approach to international migration and development, by building partnerships and ensuring coordinated actions to develop capacities, including the management of migration.

The report of the Secretary-General contains a number of important observations. It identifies migration as a key component of the globalization process. It also states that international migration is a constructive force for development, both in countries of origin and in countries of destination, and calls for sustained dialogue. We endorse the sentiments of the Secretary-General, that international cooperation is indeed crucial, if we are to achieve a win-win situation through the establishment of a United Nations forum for dialogue on international migration. We believe that such a forum would stimulate Governments to look at the issues of migration and development in a holistic manner and add value to activities undertaken at the bilateral and regional levels.

The complexities and interlinkages between migration, development and security call for careful consideration of the impact of migration. Migration policies should be focused on comprehensive security and must be complementary to sustainable development policies. Developing countries need pragmatic solutions to their development challenges in order to ensure the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We reiterate that poverty, population growth, underdevelopment and lack of opportunities contribute to the "pull and push" factors in migration.

Remittances, one of the developmental impacts of international migration, and one which has great potential as a development impetus, should be facilitated in a reliable, quick, economical and legal manner. The need to address and promote conditions for cheaper, faster and safer transfer of remittances should be seriously addressed. However, remittances should never be considered as a substitute for investment, trade, aid and debt relief to address the MDGs and underdevelopment.

Allied to that is the need to strengthen the diaspora communities and ensure their involvement in the development process. Also important are issues that would require our continued attention, including

managing temporary labour migration, increasing the benefits while mitigating the costs of the migration of skilled personnel, engaging transnational communities in the development process of countries of origin, making return migration an asset, the best way to collaborate in reducing and preventing the smuggling of and trafficking in persons, benefiting from the opportunities of the globalization of education, preventing the exploitation of migrants, and the importance of fostering a secure, regular and orderly process of migration.

The Dialogue must ensure that ample opportunities are accorded to migrants so that their rights and freedoms are not compromised. Migrants should continue to be the focus of the migration debate. Women and children constitute the majority of migrants. They continue to be disadvantaged, and this Dialogue must adopt measures to reduce their vulnerability, exploitation and abuse.

Migration is a global issue and will grow in importance. We must address it as such. We should neither downplay its significance nor ignore it completely, as that will only worsen an already challenging situation. The success of the Dialogue will depend on how we can achieve a win-win situation that benefits the migrants and responds to the needs of both the countries of origin and countries of destination.

The meeting rose at 7.50 p.m.

United Nations A/61/PV.5

General Assembly

Sixty-first session

Official Records

5th plenary meeting
Friday, 15 September 2006, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Ms. Al-Khalifa ..... (Bahrain)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development

Agenda item 55 (*continued*)

Globalization and interdependence

(b) International migration and development

Report of the Secretary-General (A/60/871)

Note by the President of the General Assembly (A/61/187)

The President: The General Assembly, pursuant to resolution 60/227 of 23 December 2005, will continue the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development.

I give the floor to Her Excellency the Baroness Royall of the House of Lords of the United Kingdom.

Baroness Royall (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom aligns itself with the European Union's statement.

We welcome this High-level Dialogue because we believe that migration, when it is well managed, can be a positive force for development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

It is a statement of fact that all countries — developing and developed alike — use legal migration as a way to fill the gaps in their labour markets. Implemented in the right way, the evidence is clear that the benefits from migration can and do lift people out of poverty. Migrant men and women bring much-needed skills and labour to sending and receiving countries. Remittances can give poor families a stable income, and the migration experience can change attitudes and empower people, particularly women.

The United Kingdom is committed to supporting developing countries' efforts to help poor people benefit from migration. We are doing that in a number of countries already. For example, we work with countries to make remittances cheaper and easier to transfer, and we finance programmes that provide poor migrants in developing countries with services. We are ready to do more.

We believe that the key to success is strong partnerships in development and in migration. The United Kingdom is committed to the country-led approach to development. We believe that developing countries should drive their own development. That is why we would like to see migration policies and actions better integrated into national poverty-reduction strategies. The African Union common position on migration and development urged member States to mainstream migration in that way. We welcome and support that initiative because donors are more likely to get behind countries' efforts to manage migration effectively if it appears in national strategies.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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But, sadly, the migration and development story is not always a positive one. Migrants can be poorly treated. Developing countries lose skilled people, such as doctors, nurses and teachers, and that puts a strain on services. People are also trafficked and smuggled, which puts them at risk of exploitation when they arrive, underlining why irregular migration, without the prospect of a legitimate job at the end of it, does not help migrants or the countries they leave.

We take the risks of migration seriously. International cooperation to reduce those risks is absolutely vital. It requires us to cooperate to encourage the use of legal migration opportunities and to prevent and deal sensibly with irregular and illegal migration and the issue of returns.

One of the most effective ways that we can help to reduce the risks of migration is through the United Kingdom's development programme. Being focused on poverty reduction, our development assistance will be helping to reduce the circumstances that make people feel they have no alternative other than to migrate. But more specifically, we are helping to mitigate the risks in a number of ways, including through programmes that aim to counter the brain drain and programmes that improve the ability of women migrants to access their rights. The United Kingdom also does not actively recruit health professionals from developing countries that do not want to lose their staff.

We see the value of this Dialogue as an opportunity to come together, as States affected in different ways by international migration, to increase our mutual understanding and analysis of the issues in a discussion that is both constructive and positive. We also want to find practical ways and means to implement what we have said and to learn from others' experience.

That is why the United Kingdom supports the proposal that the Dialogue should continue beyond this meeting. There is, in our view, a space for a global forum or group that meets on a regular, voluntary, non-binding and informal basis to build a consensus on the opportunities and challenges that migration presents for development and to share best practice.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Paolo Ferrero, Minister of Social Solidarity of Italy.

Mr. Ferrero (Italy) (*spoke in Italian; English text furnished by the delegation*): I wish to thank the General Assembly for having organized this historic international meeting. I hope that it can be a tool for a better understanding of the migration phenomenon, which is a great problem of our times, and for trying to improve coexistence among different cultures, which is a promise for collective security and the safeguarding of peace.

I also wish to confirm that Italy's views are reflected in the concepts expressed earlier in this Hall by the European Union.

Italy, as members know, was for many years a country of emigration. Our emigrants experienced racism. As a Government, we are committed to modifying our national legislation to place at its centre the rights of people and human and social rights, and in particular to end the drama of illegality that many immigrants in our country are experiencing today.

We understand quite clearly that the phenomenon of migration is rooted in the social and economic imbalances of our world, between wealthy and poor nations. At its heart, we find a spark of hope among those who leave their homes to build themselves a better future. In that framework, we wish to strive to strengthen development cooperation in all its aspects by reactivating bilateral, European and Mediterranean cooperation to address the issue.

We are therefore developing training programmes in the countries of origin to confront the criminal organizations that engage in human trafficking. To that end, we are updating our migration legislation in order to promote legal entry into our country and thereby undermine illegal immigration.

Women and children are often the main victims of trafficking in human beings. It is critical to guarantee minors full access to the rights and protections established by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We wish to stress that point because we note that it does not yet enjoy the central place in our debate that it deserves.

As to our countries' other policies, the Government has presented two bills to Parliament to make family reunification easier and to reduce to five years the time needed for an immigrant to acquire Italian citizenship. The right to citizenship is fundamental. Another focus is social rights. In Italy all

immigrants, legal and illegal alike, are guaranteed full access to national health care, and all children enjoy the right to go school, thus reducing the dropout rate, one of the most negative phenomena we are currently experiencing. Moreover, we are drafting legislation on immigrants' right to vote in local elections and safeguarding freedom of religion and creed in order to integrate all the various cultural and religious experiences into the social fabric of our country.

In conclusion, migrants are not guests on perpetual probation, but rather new citizens, able to enrich our cultural heritage with elements of their own cultures. First and foremost, they are people seeking to build their own life project. We must therefore work to raise migration out of the realm of illegality and to foster the integration of foreign citizens into our communities.

The President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Mary Wallace, Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture of Ireland.

Ms. Wallace (Ireland): I am pleased to represent Ireland today at a United Nations forum which specifically links international migration to the concept of development. I can say from Ireland's perspective that our preparation for this Dialogue has developed and improved our understanding of the synergies between those two areas and provided the impetus for increased contacts and action.

I want at the outset of my remarks to express my appreciation to my fellow countryman, Peter Sutherland, for the work undertaken by him as the Secretary-General's Special Representative for this Dialogue.

I would like to associate myself with the statement made by Ms. Tarja Filatov, Minister of Labour of Finland, on behalf of the European Union.

For Ireland, this theme naturally has a particular resonance. It is no exaggeration to say that migration, and in particular emigration, has been a defining element of Ireland's history and experience in the last 200 years. Perhaps the greatest achievement of our economic policies of recent years is that, for our young people, migration is now a matter of choice rather than the necessity that it once was.

The dramatic growth of our economy in the last decade has resulted in Ireland's experiencing the forces of migration in a completely new way. My country has become a major destination for migrant workers, with an estimated 9 per cent of our working population being non-Irish. Recent preliminary 2006 census results indicated that, in a population of 4.2 million, the number of non-Irish nationals in the State is likely to be roughly 400,000, as compared to 222,000 in 2002.

We greatly value their contribution to Ireland's social and economic development, as well as to our country's cultural diversity. We believe that this migration has benefited migrants themselves and their countries of origin. The substantial increase in migration over a short period of time has posed challenges to the State and necessitated putting in place structures, legislation and systems to manage it.

A sound and transparent legislative framework to manage migration effectively is essential in any developed economy. Recently, the Government of Ireland announced its proposals for new immigration, residence and protection legislation, which represents a radical overhaul of our immigration laws dating back to 1935. That legislation will provide the framework for orderly and managed legal migration into the State. It will set out, in a single code, comprehensive statutory procedures for the application of stated policies in the various stages of the immigration process. We are also developing policies aimed at encouraging people with special qualifications, skills and entrepreneurial abilities to consider Ireland as a permanent destination.

Integration strategies for legal migrants are another vital element in the whole area of people movement. Ireland is committed to enhancing the framework already in place for integration, as well as to ensuring that our migrant population is provided with full legal protection against exploitation, whether in the workplace or elsewhere in society.

We are, however, coming to terms with the reality that Ireland is irrevocably a major multicultural society with over 160 nationalities living and working in the country. The integration of newcomers into that new multicultural society is one of the most important social issues we will face over the next few decades.

A key challenge for this High-level Dialogue is to identify appropriate ways and means to maximize the development benefits of international migration and to minimize its negative impacts. Ireland recognizes that each country is primarily responsible for its own

development, but seeks to support its partner Governments in the developing world in working to reduce poverty and to enable their people to meet their basic needs in health, education and sustainable livelihoods. Ireland is committed to reaching the United Nations official development assistance target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income by 2012. This year, our aid spending is at its highest level ever not only in terms of volume but also as a percentage of our gross national product (GNP).

This High-level Dialogue cannot ignore the negative impact of migration on development. We recognize the problems encountered when qualified professionals migrate to better-paid jobs in richer countries. The situation has become critical in sub-Saharan Africa, where the health workforce has become seriously depleted. There is clearly a need to take concerted action to address the push-and-pull factors of health worker migration.

A priority of the aid programme of the Government of Ireland is to support partner countries to improve the management and working conditions for health workers in order to encourage them to continue working in their own countries. We also recognize the responsibility of richer countries to manage international recruitment so that skilled health workers are not encouraged to migrate from severely understaffed countries. The Government of Ireland is committed to best practices in recruitment, and we welcome the European Union initiative to develop a code of conduct for ethical recruitment of health workers.

There is increasing recognition of the potential of migrants' remittances to contribute to economic development at the household, local, national and regional levels. Ireland takes the view that work on the development potential of remittances must take place in a context where it is recognized that those remittances are private funds and are not a substitute for national development efforts, comprehensive development strategies or official development aid.

The Secretary-General's report suggests the establishment of a consultative forum that would offer Governments a venue for discussing issues related to international migration and development systematically and comprehensively. Ireland supports the establishment of such a forum, which would be non-bureaucratic, open ended, State owned, consultative and non-decision-making and would provide a framework for continued dialogue on challenges that face all our societies in the areas of migration and development.

The President: I now call on Her Excellency Ms. Consuelo Rumi, Secretary of State for Immigration and Emigration of Spain.

Ms. Rumi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation endorses Finland's remarks on behalf of the European Union delivered at the start of this High-level Dialogue, in which one of the most important phenomena of our time is being discussed. The phenomenon of immigration and its link with development in this interdependent world has a growing impact in the countries of origin and in those of transit and destination. For that reason, the United Nations, where we are all represented, is an especially appropriate and necessary framework for discussion of this matter.

Spain does not forget that for centuries and until very recently it was a country of emigration and that in the past few years it has become one of the main immigrant-receiving countries. The Government of Spain deals with the issue of migration from an open and integral perspective and promotes the planning and implementation of development strategies that deal with the root causes of migratory flows and create opportunities and expectations of a dignified life in the countries of origin. As a result, we consider that migratory policies should serve to maximize the benefits of a legal and organized migration and reduce the inevitable negative consequences for the countries involved, as well as for the migrants and their families. However, that will be possible only through dialogue and cooperation among the countries involved. It will be possibly through shared responsibility in appropriate management of migration flows.

On the other hand, the appropriate integration of immigrants in the country of destination will increase immigrants' capacity to contribute to the development of their country of origin. It must be recalled that better integration requires a clear effort by the countries of destination. They have the responsibility to design programmes for receiving immigrants, providing employment and integrating immigrants into the education system and social life on the basis of promoting equal treatment and non-discrimination.

We must also take into account the benefits of voluntary return programmes. The establishment of mechanisms that make available information about these programmes and their financing could be an incentive for immigrants to return to their country of origin and to contribute towards that country's development.

The Government of Spain will soon approve the first Strategic Plan for Citizenship and Integration, for 2006-2009, endowed with 2 million euros, and with numerous measures in favour of integration, structured around 12 areas of action: welcoming, education, employment, housing, social services, health, equal treatment, women, youth, participation, public awareness and development.

Spain is also aware that the deep causes of migration are linked to the lack of opportunities in the countries of origin. That is the source of our current efforts in development cooperation, which we know all too well will bear fruit only in the medium term. That effort will enable us to reach the target of 0.5 per cent of our gross domestic product in 2008, thus doubling in four years the Spanish contribution in this field.

The Government of Spain is determined to intensify international cooperation, promoting specific measures for action within the European Union. It is important that all countries involved, both countries of origin and countries of destination, prepare, on the basis of the principle of joint responsibility and management, appropriate measures and programmes of action. This is the path that was undertaken at the Euro-African Conference on Migration and Development held in Rabat in July and that we understand marks the path to follow in the future. The Ibero-American Meeting on Migration and Development held in Madrid, also in July, had a similar outcome and highlighted the need to advance towards an Ibero-American coordination mechanism within the framework of the Ibero-American Conference.

We are convinced that international migration cannot be handled unilaterally. The interests of migrants and their families, and their security and welfare, are at stake. Many human lives are lost tragically in the course of irregular emigration processes, and many human beings suffer as a result of illegal trafficking. There are no immigration policies that can be credible without a major, decisive struggle against clandestine immigration, which is a blight on our time and whose victims are the immigrants themselves, as well as the society that receives them.

The position of the Government of Spain is absolutely firm. During the past few years, it has been reinforcing control measures and developing an effective strategy against clandestine trafficking, including a proposal to provide bilateral and multilateral cooperation, which are truly indispensable in this area. International migration must be addressed in an orderly manner as an extraordinary opportunity for all, with responsibilities that ought to be shared.

To that end, and with the aim of promoting reflection and concerted action on the phenomenon of migration at the global level, Spain has been supporting the dialogue leading to the establishment of the global forum on migration and development proposed by the Secretary-General. Here, I wish to express my Government's appreciation and support for the efforts of Mr. Peter Sutherland, Special Representative of the Secretary-General. In the context of the global forum, a follow-up mechanism could be established in the areas charted by this High-level Dialogue.

Therefore, we hope that this Dialogue will be fruitful and reach significant conclusions that will be beneficial for the international community regarding the actions to be taken in the area of international migration and development.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Luis Paolo Barreto, Deputy Minister of Justice of Brazil.

Mr. Barreto (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): Around the world, there is practically universal acknowledgement of the importance of migration and of the contributions of migrants to countries of destination. In many nations, immigrants have been essential for economic, social and cultural development. What we now see is a pronounced lack of preparation on the part of Governments, the media and society in addressing this issue. Laws, policies and control strategies are adopted one after another in an attempt to achieve what is now called the governance of migration. Restrictive migration laws have not been effective in containing migratory flows; often indeed they serve as an incentive for the activities of international syndicates specializing in the smuggling of migrants and human trafficking.

The issue of migration governance is generally addressed by way of agreements to fight such syndicates and to tighten visa restrictions, passport controls and airport, maritime and ground security measures. There are discussions about criminalizing irregular immigration and about electronic and biometric identification systems, rigorous visa procedures, data checks and shared mechanisms for rejecting immigrants. Several such measures have been debated and adopted in many countries, with unsatisfactory results. While the number of violations of immigrants' human rights and cases of discrimination, incarceration and punishment increases by the day, the pace of migration continues to accelerate.

There is now talk of strategies to invest in countries of origin, supposedly to help promote development, but actually to help contain migratory flows. By themselves, such strategies will not be effective.

We urge that the issue of migration be addressed in terms of human rights. Our objective is to guarantee for migrants the full exercise of their civil rights. We support globalization and migration policies, dignified treatment of migrants and the fight against all forms of xenophobia. We favour broader international protection for refugees. We believe that the integration of human beings should be the main objective of foreign policies.

Countries have the sovereign right to establish rules governing the entry, stay and exit of foreigners in and from their territory. However, no country is unanswerable to the international community for violating the rights of immigrants. The transnational nature of human rights is firmly established. The criminalization of migrants, mass deportations, discriminatory treatment, denying international protection to refugees and treating migrants as if they had no rights cannot be accepted, even under the pretext of national sovereignty.

Brazil, as current President of the Common Market of the South, is making available to interested delegations a document detailing the significant progress made by our regional bloc in simplifying the movement and regularization of persons while promoting joint action to prevent and combat the smuggling of migrants and human trafficking.

Brazil fully supports the proposal of the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, to establish a global forum on migration and development. We believe that such a forum will be an important way — perhaps the only way — to address the issue of migration in a manner appropriate to today's world.

We also regard as constructive Peter Sutherland's proposal of an informal and inclusive global forum that would examine the links between migration and development from a comprehensive and holistic perspective with a major focus on human rights. We believe that the Global Migration Group should support the operations of such a forum. I also believe that it is essential to strengthen the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees so that it can tackle the grave problem of persecution in the world in relation to race, nationality, social group, political opinion, conflict and serious human rights violations.

Calm discussion on this issue could open the door to joint, creative, human and just solutions with regard to the phenomenon of migration, which linked our own ancestors together. It is a right that must also be ensured for our descendants.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Wieslaw Tarka, Deputy Minister of the Interior and Administration of Poland.

Mr. Tarka (Poland): Poland fully supports the statement delivered by the representative of Finland on behalf of the European Union. I should like to make a few additional comments on the issues under discussion as viewed from our perspective.

The recognition of migration policy as a constant component of a country's development and modernization strategy requires that it be based on reliable knowledge of the nature and consequences of migration-related phenomena at both the national and global levels. Therefore, we highly appreciate the initiative of organizing the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. We also agree that today's debate should mark the beginning of an international sharing of experience gained in this field. We expect that it will be a multithematic discussion on the complex issues involved.

I wish to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, to his team and to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Peter Sutherland, for their excellent and comprehensive preparation of this meeting.

Although the international aspects of migration-related cooperation are highly significant, its regional dimension is of key importance. Therefore, we express our support for an increase in the activities and the participation of all the regional commissions of the United Nations system with regard to migration and development issues.

It was not long ago that we met at the Euro-African Conference held in Rabat. Its outcome proved that such meetings should also be conducted in other regions, including Eastern Europe, where migration-related issues will, to an ever greater extent, influence the economic and social situation.

Poland is currently formulating the specific components of its migration policy. Historical events clearly show that Poles have been active participants in the migration processes. Our accession into the European Union integrated our country into the global, and primarily European, migration system at a higher level. Globalization processes influencing the migration phenomenon will also have an impact on migration in Poland.

We are not only a country of emigration but have also become a country of immigration. During the last decade, Poland has become a transit and destination country. To an ever greater extent, we have been experiencing the phenomenon of temporary migration. Therefore, we believe that special attention should be given to this particular issue and its challenges.

Owing to our geographical location, Poland is a place of migration mostly for the people from the East — from neighbouring European countries as well as Asian States.

As a result of political changes in the last 15 years, our country has established a legal and institutional system for migration-related issues that is in compliance with European standards. This process is still in progress pursuant to the evolving changes in European Union migration and asylum policy.

Poland has not experienced a mass population influx. However recognizing the importance of migration at the global level, we actively participate in the international discussion on the development benefits resulting from the phenomenon for receiving countries, countries of origin and migrants themselves.

Both our experience and our analysis of our European partners' migration policies support our view that effective migration management is possible and that it should be based on intensive cooperation and partnership among countries of origin, transit and destination. Such cooperation should be led on bilateral, regional, multilateral and global levels. The constructive role of non-governmental organizations and local communities is also to be emphasized.

We are convinced that the most efficient use of the organizational and financial potential of countries, regions, institutions and other partners, will be best achieved by ensuring coherence and avoiding duplication.

It is indispensable to maintain the mechanism of further cooperation among States in the area of migration within the United Nations. Therefore, we appreciate the Secretary-General's initiative aimed at establishing a consultation forum for United Nations Member States which will provide a comprehensive approach to migration- and development-related issues. In our opinion, such a forum is needed. However, it should be established within the framework of existing United Nations structures and in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

This High-level meeting is the first time that the issues of migration and development have been raised at such a high level. I am deeply convinced that we all perceive these questions to be of great importance and worthy of further development, with a view to improving the quality of the global debate on this topic. We are all aware that migration is an always-present phenomenon, and therefore our main task is to find the best way to maximize its benefits and efficiently tackle the challenges it poses. Poland is ready to take an active part and contribute to our common efforts in this domain.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Alejandro Borda, Vice-Minister of Multilateral Political Affairs of Colombia.

Mr. Borda (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation is delighted to see you, Madam President, presiding over our debates and is convinced that, under your leadership, we shall achieve the targets that we have proposed.

Owing to its complexity, international migration is charged by tensions between globalization and national sovereignty, between best practices and worst realities, between unilateral and multilateral positions.

Globalization has turned migration into a cross-cutting matter which is closely related to development, human rights, the struggle against poverty, and the quest for opportunities in an inequitable world, which is why this phenomenon should be addressed at the global and intergovernmental levels.

The global approach fully justifies its treatment in a context as inclusive as the United Nations, as the sole intergovernmental forum of a global nature. Therefore, the convening of this High-level Dialogue is welcome, and we should follow it up with all due consideration.

Colombia considers it advisable to establish regular and ongoing dialogue, which would make it possible achieve a general and comprehensive migration policy, and should lead to specific mandates for the agencies concerned.

There are other intergovernmental institutions whose composition is not universal, and which approach the issue of migration from specific points of view. But, given their characteristics and limitations, these bodies do not approach the migration issue from a comprehensive perspective. For that reason, our dialogue should be broad and inclusive of all migration elements and should at all costs avoid considering a migrant as "unskilled labour on the move", that is, merely as some merchandise required to develop the economy. On the contrary, we should start by thinking about the human dimension of the migrant and respect for his or her fundamental rights.

Regional dialogue on migration matters is useful. We believe that many specific issues could be approached in greater depth in the framework of regional encounters, in order to seek cooperation strategies. Nonetheless, migration is a phenomenon that is not limited to regional dynamics. Therefore, we need to preserve the broad and inclusive framework of the United Nations to assure that its analysis will take account of all aspects of its complex reality as a global phenomenon linked to development.

The High-level Dialogue should be a constructive forum, with flexible mechanisms for fostering understanding, policy agreement and cooperative solidarity, and which encourage thought at the domestic and global levels on the structural causes of migration and the possibilities of development.

My delegation thanks the Secretary-General for his report on international migration and development (A/60/871). In general terms, we share the approach of the document, which has visualized migration as a multidimensional phenomenon, presenting challenges and opportunities for countries of origin and destination alike, by linking migration to development.

When considering the agendas for migration and development together, we should take into account the prevailing global economic model, which undermines local forms of production and encourages migrant flows to developed countries when the local population has no viable possibility of overcoming poverty or generating wealth, investing or saving.

With the results of the economic model implemented in Latin America to improve living standards, proposals have been made based on a new paradigm of sustained development through the productive use of remittances. It should be noted that remittances are private resources, and therefore they cannot be the subject of government intervention. Their use is determined by the migrant and his immediate family, and the medium- and long-term effects of this mechanism have not been sufficiently evaluated in macroeconomic terms.

In a multilateral context, the concept of "best practices" has been imposed as the model from which international public policy has been slowly built up. Nonetheless, in the field of migration, this model cannot be an excuse for sidestepping the "worst realities" to which migrants are exposed in societies that exploit them or turn their backs on them: xenophobia, discrimination, racism, and the dismissal of the economic and cultural contributions made by migrants to their communities of origin and their destination societies. We should look at the everyday realities of migrants and their problems in order to start the participatory quest for solutions and innovative policies.

A clear understanding of the positive aspects of migration — tolerance, acceptance of the cultural diversity of migrants and their harmonious integration into receiving societies — should form the basis of the first and most important of the so-called best practices.

Finally, my delegation would like to share some thoughts on the phenomenon of migration in general that cause us some concern. I wish to refer here to the

principle of shared responsibility with respect to migration in general.

The principle of shared responsibility was adopted by the international community to address a criminal phenomenon — illicit drugs and their trafficking, as well as related crimes. To apply that principle to migration in general on that same basis would be tantamount to equating migrants with a consignment of illegal drugs such as cocaine. That would contravene fundamental principles in that respect. Migration per se is not a criminal phenomenon. Trafficking in individuals or in drugs is criminal. Therefore shared responsibility in this respect must involve international solidarity vis-à-vis the criminal phenomenon of the illicit trafficking in human beings and related criminal activities.

The President: I give the floor to Mr. Leonardo Franco, Vice-Minister for Latin American Affairs of Argentina.

Mr. Franco (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Madam President, let me begin by thanking the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for having organized this High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development.

Migrations are an essential part of Argentine history. In the past my country received great numbers of immigrants, mainly from Europe; in recent decades, they have been coming from brotherly South American countries. Argentines, too, have had to leave, as they did for political reasons in the 1970s. We wish publicly to thank other countries for having welcomed our refugees. More recently, for economic reasons, Argentines have also sought better opportunities abroad.

For all those reasons, my country is participating in this High-level Dialogue with great interest, given the very high priority that the Argentine Government attaches to the subject of migration. My country's participation is taking place in a context of regional integration that addresses the subject of migration multilaterally, from a human rights perspective, thus going beyond the traditional view of the issue, which is based exclusively on the interests of the State and its sovereignty.

We have as evidence of this the significant advances achieved through binding agreements within Mercosur and associated countries, which make this new vision a reality for migrants in our region. I should like in particular to draw attention to the consensus agreements reached at the South American Conference on Migration, contained in the 2006 Asunción Declaration.

Argentina, in keeping with its historical tradition in that respect, would like to affirm that the quest for better living conditions elsewhere should not be viewed as blameworthy, much less criminalized. Countries should therefore address the issue by seeking to establish mechanisms for cooperation and integration, assuming a common responsibility in this respect. Such undertakings should be given concrete expression, not just lip service.

Argentina enshrined this new spirit in its migration policy through the 2004 National Law on Migration. That new law reflects the commitment of our country to guaranteeing full respect for the human rights of migrants and their families. It also establishes mechanisms that can facilitate the regularization of migration, thus contributing to the elimination of all forms of discrimination, xenophobia or racism.

In Argentina, under the new legislation, the right to health care, social assistance and education at all levels is guaranteed, on an equal footing, to all foreigners, whatever their migration status.

As a consequence of the establishment of the Mercosur and Associated States Residence Agreement, signed in San Salvador de Bahia, Brazil, in 2002, Argentina implemented the National Programme on the Normalization of Migratory Documents — known as "Patria Grande" — which reflects a human and social perspective on the subject, benefiting all foreigners born in States members of that bloc. The only conditions for migratory regularization relate to nationality and one's police record, which must be clean.

That programme has made it possible, in the three months of its existence, to regularize more than 250,000 immigrants from South American countries. It is important to note that this programme is not an amnesty programme but a State policy that will apply, from now on, to all nationals of Mercosur and associated States who are currently in Argentina or will arrive at a later date.

The Argentine Government is aware of the relationship between the issue of migration and international security. That is why my country has stated in various forums that it is vital to address those

issues from a rights-based perspective, to ensure that measures adopted to promote international security do not negatively affect respect for fundamental human rights.

Accordingly, the Argentine Republic, while recognizing that the exercise of a State's sovereignty includes control over its borders and the right to decide whom it will admit to its national territory, nonetheless believes that due process should apply in that regard.

Likewise, we believe that internal security is better served by regularizing and providing documents to immigrants who arrive in our country than by marginalizing them or relegating them to anonymity, thereby rendering them defenceless against unscrupulous employers or traffickers and their despicable ways.

Our migratory policy incorporates a gender perspective aimed at ensuring that migrant women can fulfil their important role as agents of development and transmitters of values.

The trafficking of persons is one of the most urgent and serious problems related to the movement of individuals. Reports indicate that the geographical scope of the problem has expanded and that the majority of victims are women and children. International cooperation is indispensable in uncovering and combating the complex transnational networks involved in the trafficking of human beings.

Before concluding, I would like to draw attention to the fact that Argentina has circulated a paper entitled "A paradigm shift: addressing international migration from a human rights perspective" (A/61/315, annex).

In conclusion, we believe that, if they are to succeed, the actions of the international community in the area of migration must me addressed in a comprehensive manner and on a multilateral basis. Argentina reaffirms its determination to participate actively in forums and mechanisms for international cooperation, with a view to promoting new principles for migration based on the ethical consideration of respect for the human rights of migrants. Accordingly, I would like to welcome, on behalf of my country, the Government of Belgium's offer to host the first session of the consultative forum on migration.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Joris Demmink, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Justice of the Netherlands.

Mr. Demmink (Netherlands): First of all, let me stress that this High-level Dialogue is a very timely event. As the Secretary-General states in paragraph 7 of his report (A/60/871), "Each of us holds a piece of the migration puzzle but none has the whole picture. It is time to start putting it together".

The Netherlands attaches great importance to this global Dialogue and firmly believes that it should be the beginning, not the end, of a global process of discussion and cooperation. It is only through open and constructive dialogue about the positive and negative aspects of migration and respect for each other's views that States can achieve mutually beneficial cooperation. This concerns both South-North and South-South cooperation, since the problems linked to South-South migration are as important as those linked to South-North migration. Migration should therefore be addressed as a global phenomenon.

We align ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Finland on behalf of the European Union (EU), especially as regards the relationship between migration and the Millennium Development Goals, the brain drain, circular migration, reducing transfer costs for remittances, smuggling and trafficking and the protection of refugees.

There is a clear relationship between migration and development. Migration has both positive and negative consequences for the economic and social development of the country of origin, as well as of the country of destination. Development can therefore influence the need to migrate. The Netherlands annually spends 0.8 per cent of its gross domestic product on the fight against poverty in the world, thereby contributing to the removal of root causes of migration.

Two years ago, the Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation and her colleague responsible for immigration and integration presented to parliament a joint paper on migration and development. An English version is available in this Hall. In our view, it is a good example of policy coherence. Coherence has to start at home if it is to be effective internationally.

The Netherlands is also a strong advocate of coherence, cooperation and policy coordination among States and between States and international organizations — in our own region, among regions and globally. At the same time, we organize regular

meetings with representatives of migrants' organizations to enable them to provide input for policy formulation.

Countries benefit from managing flows of migrants. Creating migration management capacity can therefore make a major contribution. The Netherlands actively supports projects, especially in Africa, helping immigration agencies and other authorities to register and assist migrants and protect refugees.

Temporary labour migration can have significant advantages for migrants themselves, as well as for their countries of origin and destination. The Netherlands is examining how temporary labour migration from developing countries can serve the interests not only of the Netherlands and of migrants, but of countries of origin as well.

The Netherlands works to promote "brain gain" by encouraging migrants to temporarily return to their countries of origin to contribute to development. Migrants can act as a bridge between countries of origin and destination. For instance, in Ghana we developed a project for the temporary return of Ghanaian doctors who qualified in the Netherlands. Last April, we started a new project for the temporary return of qualified migrants to Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, the Sudan, Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Every country should protect the rights of migrants, particularly women and children, and combat xenophobia and racism. The Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants, acting under the mandate of the new Human Rights Council, has a vital role here.

For many women and their families, migration is the all-important step towards a better life — not only because it means more income, but because of the possibilities of empowerment that it offers. But migration also poses risks for women. Migrant women often do work that is dirty, difficult, demeaning and dangerous. Trafficking in persons is the dark underside of globalization, and it must be exposed and rooted out.

It is essential that this Dialogue continue. We call upon the General Assembly at this High-level Dialogue to support the Secretary-General's proposal for a global, informal and voluntary forum in which States can discuss common problems, exchange best practices and find common solutions; the establishment of such a forum is supported by the Global Migration Group and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Peter Sutherland. We warmly welcome Belgium's offer to host the first meeting of the forum. In the meantime, countries will have to continue working together in every conceivable way. This week we have made a good start.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Victor Filistovich, Vice-Minister of Interior of Belarus.

Mr. Filistovich (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Belarus, I would like to thank the Secretariat for its excellent work in having organized this High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development.

The fact that Member States are participating at such a high level in this forum clearly shows their readiness to cooperate in a productive manner in regulating migration and reducing its negative social effects. It also proves their commitment to protecting the rights and freedoms of migrants and refugees, as well as their willingness to discuss the major challenges of migration and the impact that it has on development throughout the world.

Belarus supports a constructive international dialogue on migration and the need for effective measures to fight trafficking in persons, as well as on other, emerging, challenges that pose a threat to our societies. One concrete example of that support is the initiative of Belarus to establish a global partnership against slavery and trafficking in persons in the twenty-first century.

Belarus believes that the draft resolution it has prepared on improving coordination of efforts against slavery and trafficking in persons will prove to be an important step towards a global partnership framework. Support for that initiative would represent a valuable contribution to fighting an almost forgotten evil that is now posing a growing threat to human civilization. Support for the initiative would also mean making a solid contribution to the common effort of building international peace and security.

Human trafficking will never be eradicated as long as the demand for it continues to increase. In its endeavour to ensure a stronger legal framework to hold accountable those seeking sexual relations with the victims of trafficking, Belarus has organized a high-

level international conference on Fighting the demand for trafficking: ways to improve international cooperation among countries of origin and destination. Belarus will host that conference on 26 and 27 October.

In early 1990s, the process of migration throughout the vast area of the former Soviet Union saw fundamental changes that led to enormous, out-of-control migration flows. That process affected Belarus as well. The timely adoption of a State migration strategy, along with effective legal measures and two State programmes, helped to bring order to chaotic migration and to ensure stability within the country.

Belarus has now ensured that there is adequate migration legislation in place that complies with international standards. We also have a system of efficient legal and social assistance for migrants. Belarus has also established an effective legal regime for refugees and other aliens staying in the country and has taken practical measures to fight illegal migration and human trafficking. There is also a regime in place to cover foreign residents.

Belarus is currently implementing a third State migration programme for 2006-2010. It aims to strengthen State security, promote economic growth and ensure that migrants fully enjoy their legal rights.

The Belarus State migration policy includes the following priorities: utilizing the potential of migration to promote social, economic and demographic development; promoting the social integration of migrants; attempting to stem the outward flow of academics; ensuring free access to job opportunities abroad; and promoting international cooperation in the field of migration.

Given the negative impact of emigration by qualified and prospective professionals on the intellectual potential of the country, Belarus shares the view of the Secretary-General that there is a need to retain qualified professionals in countries that invest in their education and training.

It is undeniable that the challenge of migration has a global dimension today. Migration can therefore be most effectively addressed only on the basis of international solidarity, cooperation and coordinated efforts by all interested parties. At the same time, the immediate impact of migration and the need to tackle it often weigh most heavily upon countries that on their own are unable to implement programmes aimed at regulating migration, creating national asylum systems and confronting illegal migration. Such countries need assistance from the international community to develop effective migration policies and establish national controls and statistical instruments in the area of migration. Developing countries, countries with economies in transition, such as Belarus, and transit countries face similar problems.

Belarus is actively participating in a number of international and subregional forums on migration issues. We are also cooperating closely in this area both with other States and with international organizations. Our cooperation with neighbouring countries is particularly dynamic and productive.

The Republic of Belarus proposed, and is now participating in, the establishment of the Euro-Asian Programme on Forced Displacement and Migration. The programme provides a new mechanism for dialogue and interaction on the basis of the 1996 Geneva Conference on the problems of refugees and displaced persons.

Belarus agrees that there is a need to expand international cooperation and dialogue on migration. We are still considering the proposal to establish a consultative forum on migration. At the same time, we believe that while considering that proposal we need to ensure that existing mechanisms for cooperation are fully utilized, especially the experience and facilities of the International Organization for Migration.

In conclusion, I would like to express the hope that the High-level Dialogue will encourage us to take not one but a number of steps towards our common objective of ensuring global peace and security.

The President: Before we proceed, I would like to inform members that this afternoon, before we continue with our list of speakers, the Chairpersons of the four round tables will present summaries of the deliberations of their respective sessions.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jorge Lazaro, Vice-Minister for Peruvian Communities Abroad of Peru.

Mr. Lazaro (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like first to say that Peru associates itself with the statements delivered yesterday by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Rio Group and by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Peru is participating in this Dialogue with great interest and expectations, for we believe that the call by the Secretary-General is in line with the major objectives of countries like Peru that have a high number of migrants abroad.

For six years now, my country has been systematically carrying out a policy to provide consular services and protection on the basis of protecting the interests and rights of Peruvians living abroad. Although there has been significant progress, even more challenges remain. The current Government therefore attaches particular importance to the protection of Peruvians abroad. That clearly entails taking steps at the bilateral, subregional, regional, hemispheric and international levels. As an illustration of that tangible commitment, last May Peru hosted the Special International Conference of Developing Countries with Substantial International Migrant Flows. The Conference adopted the Lima Declaration (A/61/91, annex), a document that I am certain will enrich our debates.

We therefore believe that the time is right for the international community to acknowledge the contributions of migration and to consider a renewed and multidimensional focus when putting in place policies that are specific, viable and sustainable. That would be a logical step to take on the path we have embarked upon to jointly address the problems and positive elements of international migration.

Progress has been made along thematic lines thanks to the dedicated work done as part of the Berne Initiative. Progress has also been made on the theoretical and practical fronts thanks to the work of the International Organization for Migration, an organization to which Peru is grateful for its unwavering support for our undertakings in the area of migration. We also take note of the contribution made by the report of the Global Commission on International Migration.

That said, we are faced with a great responsibility. This Dialogue aims at putting in place the cornerstone of an ambitious agenda, namely, undertaking a shared commitment to enhance the positive impact of migration for countries of origin, transit and destination, as well as for migrants themselves. We now need to set into motion the political will of all Member States in order to reach agreement on priorities, approaches and guidelines. Peru is therefore amenable to the proposal of the Secretary-General regarding the establishment of a forum on international migration within a United Nations framework. In that regard, we wish to express our gratitude for the work of Mr. Peter Sutherland.

Mr. Gochie (Zimbabwe), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In that undertaking we should bear in mind that some of the most up-to-date and advanced know-how regarding migrant protection can be found in countries of origin. In that connection, I should just like to mention two efforts in which my country has recently participated. The first was the decision soon to begin negotiations with Argentina to bilateralize the Common Market of the South Residency Agreement. That agreement is based on a legal principle that already represents significant progress, namely, that residency is based on proof of nationality, and not on employment status. The second example has to do with our recent signing with Chile of a memorandum of understanding on employment, which is based on the United Nations International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

We have every intention of making this Dialogue a success in addressing international migration and development. We are convinced that, in expressing our views, we will also be able to learn from the lessons and other positive experiences shared here and apply them in our country.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Emilio Giménez Franco, Vice Minister for Economic Affairs and Integration of Paraguay.

Mr. Giménez Franco (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the South American Conference on Migration. I do so in my capacity as representative of the country serving as President Pro Tem and in discharge of the mandate of the Conference.

The Sixth South American Conference on Migration met in Paraguay on 4 and 5 May and issued the Asunción Declaration, which gives clear and balanced expression to the continent's consensus position on migration and development, viewing them as a multidimensional phenomenon of growing complexity. The Asunción Declaration emphasizes the

progress that has been made in migration in the Common Market of the South, the Andean Community and the South American Community of Nations, as well as the unilateral measures adopted by some States in positive response to the necessities of international migration. Such measures include the "Patria Grande" plan to regularize migration, proposed by the Republic of Argentina.

The Conference urged the international community to work on migration policies based on the ethical dimension of respect for the rights of migrants. It proclaimed that migration should be seen as the right of every individual and that the human rights of migrants deserve wholehearted respect, regardless of the migrants' status. Migrant workers and their families should be protected from the acts of racism, xenophobia and discrimination that are ever more frequently seen in certain societies. We in South America believe that promoting social inclusion and tolerance towards migrants and their families can maximize the positive impact of migration.

The Asunción Declaration acknowledges the recent strong feminization of migratory movements. Almost half of current migrants are women, which has a heavy impact on families and the social groups remaining in the countries of origin. Since women migrants suffer two-fold discrimination, both as women and as migrant labourers, greater efforts must be made to protect them, ensuring in particular the rights of women and unaccompanied minors, regardless of their status in the receiving countries.

We firmly assert that migrants are the agents of development. They should be guaranteed access to the labour market, and the receiving countries should acknowledge their professional and academic credentials. This would help to identify the positive aspects of migration, both for the migrants themselves and for the sending and receiving countries.

That connection between migration and development explains the increase in migratory flows. Inequality, social exclusion, lack of opportunity and income gaps stimulate global human mobility. They also have an impact on the countries of origin, which lose their most skilled human resources, whose training puts enormous economic strain on developing countries. In contrast, the receiving countries profit from the highly skilled human resources they host, which reflects the transfer of the public investment in education made by the developing countries to the developed ones. Having lost their best-trained people, the sending countries see their productivity reduced, which in turn has a negative impact on their own development.

For all those reasons, we must deal with the unjustifiable contradiction that, while we promote and practice the free mobility of financial resources through globalization, human mobility suffers from counter-globalization.

The remittances that emigrants send home to their families are private. They must be considered as a phenomenon separate and distinct from official development assistance. We must find the mechanisms to direct those funds towards the development of the societies they are intended for, while ensuring the privacy, confidentiality and security of remittances, as well as the lowest possible cost for such transactions.

Given its multidimensional complexity, the phenomenon of migration is not immune to the activities of transnational organized crime groups. Migration frequently degenerates into violations of human rights. The dream of building a better future for migrants and their families frequently leads to illegal trafficking in migrants, trade in persons and even organ trafficking.

We therefore believe that mechanisms to halt irregular migration should not limit migrants' access to international protection. Migrants of irregular status, and in particular those who have fallen prey to trafficking, should enjoy sufficient guarantees and options from the sending, transit and receiving States in order to be able to regularize their situation, denounce criminals, and have unrestricted access to social services, even if they have migrated illegally.

The United Nations must be more involved in the protection and defence of the rights of migrants. Particular consideration should be given to the situation relating to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, adopted in December 1990. While that instrument came into effect in 2003, only 34 of the 192 countries of the United Nations have ratified it to date. Many countries of our continent are not among the ratifiers. It is a troubling fact that not one of the developed countries has ratified it.

South America is a continent that has always been affected by migration, either as a destination for the

past five centuries or as a place of origin in recent times. The South American Conference on Migration recognizes certain negative effects of migrant flows, but many of those could be mitigated if the countries involved were to promote coordinated and consensual work in the context of the principle of shared responsibility, with a view to counteracting illicit trafficking in migrants, the trade in persons, trafficking in minors and other related crimes, in accordance with current international law.

Given the many years that the countries of our region and the Ibero-American community have been working with the International Organization for Migration, the commitment of that organization to working in full cooperation with the United Nations and its States Members to streamline resources and ensure best practices, and Secretary-General Kofi Annan's concern on this issue, the initiative to create a global forum on migration should provide an opportunity to demonstrate that we can efficiently, effectively and transparently address the challenge of making global migration policies coherent.

To the extent that public policies are adopted to promote co-development in the countries of origin, transit and destination, they will contribute to stabilizing the populations in their respective societies; the costs and benefits of migratory flow will be assumed symmetrically by the countries concerned; migration will be managed in a responsible, egalitarian, secure and respectful way; and social development will ensue in the terms stipulated in the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development and the loftiest principles of international humanitarian law.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Richard Msowoya, Minister of State in the Office of the President Responsible for Poverty and Disaster Management Affairs of Malawi.

Mr. Msowoya (Malawi): At the outset, I would like to associate my delegation with the statement delivered by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Let me also express the Government of Malawi's appreciation to the Secretary-General for preparing a comprehensive and illuminating report that highlights the multidimensional aspects of migration and development. The report clearly brings out the strong linkages between migration and development, and it also makes some recommendations that merit the attention and critical consideration of the international community.

Migration generates social, cultural and political consequences that must be carefully considered in order to ensure that it works for both the sending and receiving countries. We therefore welcome this opportunity to share knowledge about how to manage the movement of people.

The globalization of markets, information and technology, as well as the liberalization of many laws affecting individuals' mobility, have enabled vast movements of people on a scale never seen before. And just as they have with globalization, many of our countries have failed to take full advantage of the benefits of increased migration.

Indeed, there are some indisputable advantages of international migration to the development of countries. Those include the dynamic human link between cultures, economies and societies; remittances; skills and know-how accumulation; transfer of technology and institutional knowledge; and inspiring ways of thinking, both socially and politically, among others. However, if those are not properly harnessed, a lot of us stand to lose. That is why we would like to underline the need to carefully design policies that will guarantee that international migration becomes beneficial for the development of the countries of origin and the receiving countries alike.

The report of the Secretary-General states that nearly 200 million people live outside their country of birth, and in 2005 they contributed nearly $250 billion in remittances to their countries of origin. It is now widely acknowledged that remittances are one of the development effects of migration, particularly at the individual or household level. While celebrating the importance of remittances, we need to be reminded that countries of origin certainly lose human capital through the emigration of skilled professionals and unskilled labourers.

In the case of Malawi, for every three doctors trained, two are likely to migrate in search of better prospects. The statistics are worse for registered nurses. For the past five years, Malawi has witnessed the mass exodus of nurses to work in the West. That has seriously hampered the delivery of health services at home.

Brain drain is a serious deterrent to sustainable development. Therefore, there is a serious need for us to work together to come up with strategies at all levels that will ensure that migration benefits all concerned. We call for intensified international cooperation that can benefit the small national economies that are most vulnerable to brain drain, particularly in such crucial sectors as health and education.

Malawi would like to join some delegations that have spoken before to advocate regular and constructive dialogue between countries of origin and destination in order to strengthen cooperation and to identify common solutions, including the allocation of development aid for the eradication of poverty in countries of origin.

The need to explore other opportunities for involving the diaspora in development is of critical importance. In that respect, we would like to acknowledge the Migration for Development in Africa project, spearheaded by the International Organization for Migration and the Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals programmes, which have in a modest way brought out the potential of the diaspora in the development of their countries. Those are programmes that must be supported and encouraged.

Furthermore, our Governments need support in their efforts to encourage national expatriates to return to their countries of origin directly through professional and financial incentives, and indirectly by creating legal and institutional frameworks conducive to return.

Malawi is supportive of the Secretary-General's proposal to have a consultative forum that would provide an opportunity to discuss issues relating to international migration and development in a systematic and comprehensive way. We believe that this would ensure the retention of migration and development high on the development agenda of the international community.

Malawi has porous borders. As a transit country, we receive a lot of asylum seekers in genuine need. However, transnational criminal elements have also taken advantage of the situation to launch their criminal activities, including trafficking of women and children. Those are transnational problems that require transnational solutions.

Let me conclude by emphasizing the need to place the effective protection of the economic, social and cultural rights of the migrant at the centre of all migration management systems. It is my delegation's sincere hope that this dialogue will not be an end in itself.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Albert Agosson, Minister Delegate to the Minister for Foreign Affairs in Charge of African Integration and the Diaspora of Benin.

Mr. Agosson (Benin) (*spoke in French*): Benin welcomes the positive initiative of the international community to organize this High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development.

Globalization promotes the mobility of the factors of production, including labour. Like other factors, the cross-border mobility of labour must now respond, in the same way as any export commodity, to ever-more stringent standards. That is the lesson that my country, the Republic of Benin, has learned in its fight against unofficial and clandestine migration. In that regard, host countries and countries of origin are called upon to act. As both a sending and receiving country, Benin has suffered the negative consequences of migration, but also benefits from some of its positive aspects.

As most reports note, migration is expected to increase, and there is no indication that it will decrease in the medium term. On the contrary, all factors lead us to believe that not even the newly adopted immigration policies of the northern countries will stem the brain drain.

In addition to the traditional forms that we know and have studied, one type of migration is of particular concern to my Government — that of vulnerable persons, such as women and children, who are subject to trafficking and human trade. Trafficking, exploitation and trade in children are the results of the limitations and failures of the educational system. Such failures include the facts that schooling is not universal; that people with higher education are finding it increasingly difficult to find work, which discourages parents from sending children to school; and that legislation and insufficient enforcement cannot halt the trafficking of children.

As to Benin, an approximate assessment — which we hope to develop in depth — indicates that its

population living and working outside the country stood at about 1 million in 1983 and had risen to almost 3 million by 2005. Of those 3 million, 1.02 per cent chose Europe as a destination and 0.27 per cent chose North America. The vast majority — 98.29 per cent — live in Africa.

The Government of Benin recognizes the importance of international migration and its impact on the country's economy. The number of citizens concerned, the amount of remittances sent by migrants and the tragic experience of migrants who are forced to return attest to the acuteness of the problem for Benin and justify the efforts made to manage the diaspora at the institutional and political levels.

I should now like to focus on the link between the prosperity of our countries — countries of origin — and the brain drain. It is acknowledged that skilled migrants contribute to the economic growth of receiving countries. It has also been observed that skilled migrants are less likely than those with fewer skills to send remittances to their country of origin, perhaps because of the opportunities for integration offered by the receiving country and the stability of employment for highly skilled labour. Be that as it may, the emigration of highly skilled labour represents a direct loss in terms of the development of communities and countries of origin — a loss that, members will agree, is not offset by the remittances periodically sent back. But we must recognize that the weakness of the productive capacities of countries of origin, which does not allow them to hold on to their skilled personnel trained at great expense, is one of the reasons for it.

However, the sending of remittances establishes a direct link between migration and development. Therefore, above and beyond the issue of remittances, we must operationalize existing mechanisms in order to transfer the knowledge of the diaspora to the country of origin. That would increase the contributions made by emigrants to the development of our countries.

With regard to remittances, between 1999 and 2005 Beninese citizens living abroad officially transferred to Benin a total of $698.4 million. If we look at the purposes to which those resources were assigned, we see that, in the absence of an appropriate source of guidance and advice, remittances are used mostly to purchase household goods and property. That highlights the need for a policy to assist and guide migrants so that they will want to invest in their country of origin.

Mindful of the importance of such remittances, Benin calls on the international community to support the Ministerial Declaration of the Ministerial Conference of the Least Developed Countries on migrant remittances, particularly the initiative to establish a migrant remittance observatory for least developed countries. Here, I wish to reiterate my country's offer to the international community to serve as the headquarters for such an observatory.

Notwithstanding the many legislative and regulatory measures already adopted, the difficulties observed in the management of migration to promote development require that the international community take a number of actions that would be directly in line with the decisions of the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the African Union held in Banjul in July 2006. It should offer children who have been excluded from the formal education system an alternative form of literacy training and education for better subsequent integration into the economic fabric; encourage bilateral agreements between countries of emigration and immigration to protect the rights of migrant workers, particularly the most vulnerable among them; encourage all States to integrate into their development and poverty alleviation strategies coherent migration policies that ensure respect for the internationally recognized rights of migrants; provide technical and financial support to countries of emigration so that they raise the awareness of their populations regarding the conditions prevailing in traditional countries of immigration; improve knowledge about migrant workers' rights in countries of immigration with a view to facilitating respect for those rights; help countries to know more about their diasporas; and promote and strengthen mechanisms to facilitate use of the expertise of diasporas to meet the needs of countries of origin.

Benin is confident that these meetings will enable us to discuss all these issues. Following up on them will require everyone's support for the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a consultative global forum on migration and development issues. The forum will be a special framework for discussion and consultation on the challenges and issues bound up with international migration.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Rosario Graciano de los Santos, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic.

Mrs. Graciano de los Santos (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is important for me to participate in this important meeting. International migration is one of the great global phenomena of our time. In today's world, the mobility of people who cross international borders and move to other countries in search of better living conditions is constantly increasing. They are driven by a lack of development — in particular, a lack of jobs and an adequate livelihood, not only for them, but also for their families.

As representatives of Governments, we must play a significant role in formulating and carrying out public policies concerning the positive impact of migration. We must explain the link between migration and development. Understanding and identifying the role of countries — especially countries of immigration — in that regard is the main challenge before us.

The Dominican Republic, as a country that both sends and receives migrants, has witnessed significant changes in migration since the mid-1970s. The increasing proportion of women migrants, the changing perception of Dominicans living abroad and the process of social change in the diaspora itself — caused by the enhanced social standing of second- and third-generation emigrants, whose social, economic and cultural conditions are better than those of their forebears — offer the best possible framework within which to implement policies that reflect those profound changes.

Policies on international migration are a sovereign matter for States, which have national standards for their formulation and execution. However, Governments in all regions of the world are aware that migration must be planned and managed through international coordination and cooperation.

Governments are accordingly making a point of participating in non-binding regional consultative forums bringing together representatives of States, non-governmental organizations and business people, among other actors, to discuss the problem of migration in a cooperative manner, promoting exchanges and the coordination of bilateral and multilateral agreements on international migration.

Our country joins in the efforts of the international community to raise awareness about the dimensions of the phenomenon of migration at the global level. The High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development is an appropriate forum in which our countries can discuss new ideas on migration policies aimed at promoting development. Such policies should have both a national and a global focus to enhance regional consultations, which thus far have had very fruitful results for the participating States. We hope that this important meeting will come up with proposals and recommendations that lead countries to improve conditions so that they can meet the challenges posed by migration and take advantage of the opportunities it offers.

I should like to highlight three important initiatives taken recently by the Government of the Dominican Republic in cooperation with other countries of the region.

First is the International Congress on Creating Synergies between Migration and Development, held in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Another is the private sector forum to explore linkages between remittances and development, organized with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP), which brought together participants from companies dealing with remittances, microfinance and information and communications technology and regulators and parties offering support for projects.

The third initiative is the Regional Consultation on Migration, Remittances and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, organized with UNDP, the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation, the United Nations Public-Private Alliance for Rural Development, the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and others, and with support from several private-sector companies. Government, business and diaspora groups, non-governmental groups and international organizations representing 13 countries attended, including Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru.

President Leonel Fernández Reyna of the Dominican Republic delivered an important statement on diaspora issues and remittances, and the meeting adopted a declaration for consideration at this High-level Dialogue.

I am very pleased to make the declaration available to this meeting. We wish to invite those present here to give attention to the proposals in the declaration, and we urge that Governments and international bodies, especially UNDP, use them as a basis for new policies and actions in response to the needs and to the opportunities that we have identified.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency, Mr. Essa Maldoun, Deputy Minister for Labour Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Maldoun (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): First of all, we would like to congratulate Ms. Al-Khalifa on her election to head the General Assembly at its sixty-first session. We wish her every success in her work and pledge the support of our delegation. I would also like to support the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of South Africa, who spoke on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Migration is a human phenomenon and has existed since time immemorial. Throughout history it has taken different forms, individually and collectively. At the same time, it has basically been a quest for better living conditions, undertaken to meet the economic needs of migrants. Migration has been a melting pot of civilizations and cultures which has often brought together civilizations, cultures and peoples.

We cannot consider migration today without taking into consideration globalization, which has positive and negative aspects. Since the migrant's interest in improving his or her living conditions is what dominates, globalization reflects with great clarity the need to close the gaps left by severe economic inequalities throughout the world. We need international action in order to deal with the core issues of migration, economic development and the fair distribution of wealth.

In order to draw maximum benefit from international migration and achieve collective development, it is necessary to develop a global economic methodology and an international policy that recognizes migration's role in development. To achieve such a methodology, it would be wise not to consider remittances as a substitute for official development assistance (ODA).

It is also necessary to lower the costs of transferring funds and to make sure that remittances are made easily to countries of origin without any type of discrimination whatsoever. Likewise, migrants should be able to transfer retirement pensions without any obstacles created by the tax system of the host countries. It is also vital to provide assistance for remittances to developing countries. Counter-terrorism laws should not be an impediment for transfers of funds that are necessary for development. It is just as necessary not to impose unilateral financial restrictions that would impede such transfers. In this context, the question of partnerships between associations of migrants abroad and the Governments of their countries of origin needs to be studied.

Our region has seen an artificial form of migration that was not dealt with in the Secretary-General's report (A/60/871), albeit that it has a very serious impact. In paragraph 110, the Secretary-General talks about the relationship between migration and development, but does not take into account some important elements, such as displacement. For example, the report does not discuss forced migration, nor the question of the protection of refugees or those who seek asylum.

Illegal migration, as we have seen in our region, particularly among Palestinians under Israeli occupation, has caused the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, now numbering millions. Those people have been forcibly displaced internally, or externally to neighbouring countries.

Syria and other countries in the region have known various forms of migration from neighbouring countries because of the Israeli occupation and the aggressive actions that caused the forced migration of Palestinians. In addition, Syria has welcomed more than 400,000 displaced Syrians from the Israeli-occupied Golan, more than half a million Palestinian refugees and many more Iraqis.

The last form of migration is the temporary migration of more than 200,000 Lebanese, a direct consequence of the latest Israeli aggressions against Lebanon. There is no need to explain to the Assembly the magnitude of the obstacles that such migration creates for the economic and social development of our country and the entire region.

The humanitarian situation that migrants face, considering the diverse types of migration, should be of great interest to the international community, which has adopted a number of international instruments to regulate and maintain the rights of migrants. We believe that the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families is the most comprehensive. My country, Syria, which believes that it is necessary to preserve the rights of migrant labour, has become a party to that Convention and to other human rights conventions that regulate human rights for workers.

We have also become a party to six international instruments that come within the United Nations system of human rights conventions. Moreover, combating the illicit trade in persons and human smuggling requires an intensification of efforts on the part of the international community. We believe that the best way to coordinate our actions in this area is through the transfer of technology that can be used to uncover such crimes.

Damascus, which is the oldest capital in the world, has experienced throughout its history 33 different civilizations that have become one, thus making Syria and Syrian society a unique example in history. Syrian society is capable of accepting immigrants and integrating them, and of engaging in a cultural and civilizational dialogue.

Over the past few centuries, Syrian emigrants have made tremendous contributions to the civilization, culture and economy of host countries throughout the world. Those migrants are people who have two countries — the country of destination and the Syrian Arab Republic itself.

We definitely support the content of the report of the Secretary-General. We also believe that discussions on international migration policies should not be based on an economic approach alone. Migration also produces social, cultural and political effects that need to be addressed.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Asgar Alakbarov, Vice-Minister for Internal Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Mr. Alakbarov (Azerbaijan) (*spoke in Russian*): The Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan welcomes the convening of this High-level Dialogue on Migration and Development, which will allow us to identify prospects for future international cooperation on migration for years to come.

In Azerbaijan, more than 20 laws and by-laws have been enacted to regulate the migration process, most notably the laws on migration and labour migration. Azerbaijan is a State party to seven basic United Nations legal instruments on the rights of migrants, including the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its complementary Protocols on migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons. Those legal instruments laid the foundation for a National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and a law on combating trafficking in human beings, which were adopted in 2004 and 2005, respectively. National measures to regulate migration are based on the State Concept of Migration Policy adopted in 2004 and on the State Migration Programme. One of the steps for the implementation of that Programme was the establishment of the Migration Service within the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 2005.

Since the restoration of our national independence in 1991, Azerbaijan has seen substantial emigration, so that it may be described as essentially a country of origin for migrants. The reason for that lies in the hardships ensured in the transitional period, further aggravated by the emergence of some one million refugees and internally displaced persons as a result of the occupation of a part of Azerbaijan's territory by Armenia.

In addition, a significant number of our fellow citizens are currently residing and working in many Commonwealth of Independent States countries. The influence of migrants on the social and economic life of the country is undeniable. At the same time, there appears to be a need to develop special tools to encourage the use of remittances for poverty reduction and sustainable development. There is also a need to simplify procedures for transferring funds. Active interaction with financial and other relevant agencies in the countries of destination offers a means of solving this problem.

Permit me to touch upon another urgent issue, namely, protection of the rights of migrants. We cannot but be deeply concerned at the recent increase in the number of manifestations of racism and xenophobia towards migrants. Existing stereotypes of migrants create obstacles to their full integration into society, making for serious social problems. In this regard, I

would like to appeal to the countries of destination to undertake the necessary measures.

Trafficking in human beings is the most dangerous consequence of illegal migration; combating that type of crime should therefore be a priority. A Department to Combat Human Trafficking has accordingly been established within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, a hotline has been launched with the assistance of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and non-governmental organizations, and a shelter for victims of human trafficking is currently near completion.

In order both to address negative aspects of migratory processes and to benefit from their positive potential, an active and efficient partnership is needed between the countries of origin and the countries of destination, as well as close cooperation between Government agencies, the private sector and civil society. Cooperation with relevant international organizations is equally important. In this context, the work of the Global Migration Group is crucial.

In conclusion, I would like to acknowledge the efficient and consistent activities of the International Organization for Migration. I am confident that, in close collaboration with the United Nations, the IOM will contribute significantly to addressing the urgent issues under discussion during this Dialogue.

The Acting President: I now call on Her Excellency Mrs. Ana Eugenia Durán, Vice-Minister of Government and Policy of Costa Rica.

Mrs. Durán (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin my statement by reiterating Costa Rica's full support for what has been said by the delegations of South Africa and Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Rio Group, respectively.

In those group statements, the global nature of migration was reiterated, as was the need to address the phenomenon from an equally global perspective. We emphasized the challenges before us and the advantages that together we must turn to best account. The link between migration and development, the impact of globalization, the increasing feminization of migration and the need to address this complex topic in human terms, as well as from a human rights perspective, is a constant that must be emphasized at every opportunity.

My delegation understands that we have been invited to a Dialogue and, accordingly, we hope to benefit not only from the experiences and aspirations we share with one another, but also, and in particular, from the concrete, positive results emanating from this interaction.

I should like to share some data regarding the situation in my country. Before doing so, I avail myself of this opportunity to congratulate our brothers from Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua, who, together with Costa Rica, today are celebrating our Day of Independence.

Although a small and developing country, Costa Rica is ranked by the United Nations Population Division as first among destination countries in Latin America and ninth worldwide. Translated into figures, that means that, in February of this year, 10 per cent of our population were migrants, which explains why the topic is of particular importance to us.

It seems clear that the vast majority of our countries are simultaneously countries of origin, transit and destination. However, there is still a preconceived idea that migration in our time is a North-South phenomenon. Statistics reveal how distant from reality that is.

The phenomenon of South-South migration should also be considered in all of its facets and implications. Accordingly, one of the greatest challenges to a developing country that is mainly a destination country is to take duly into account the increase in demand for basic services to ensure that there will be a life of dignity for the entire population, including the migrant population. That is the greatest challenge facing the developing countries.

As a country committed to the promotion and defence of human rights, Costa Rica is convinced that any migration legislation and policy should protect against all forms of racism and discrimination, squarely oppose xenophobia and promote positive maximization of the benefits of contact between immigrants and local inhabitants.

At the same time, it is clear that the Government must guarantee the security and well-being of its citizens, taking appropriate measures within the rule of law to prevent the entry and residence of foreigners whose criminal backgrounds or illegal behaviour suggest that they might jeopardize security.

This is a difficult balance to strike. To do so, Costa Rica has identified the following three basic aspects among others. The phenomenon of migration should be addressed at the national level by bringing together all the sectors concerned, both positively and negatively, avoiding the temptation of short-term political gains and giving priority to an approach that provides guarantees and has a human face. The international community must take joint action to ensure that migration is orderly and safe and that it respects human rights of all. The international community must provide focal points for cooperation and development, focusing on individuals and ensuring their well-being. Attainment of the Millennium Development Goals is important but insufficient.

This requires a high degree of coordination and cooperation by all sectors at the national and international levels. It also calls for deep knowledge and understanding about the social, economic and institutional repercussions of migration, in both countries of destination and countries of origin and transit.

Finally, any discussion of the issue of migration as well as its causes and consequences in Latin America and the Caribbean should take into account that approximately 90 per cent of the Latin Americans living in extreme poverty live in middle-income countries. The priorities of international cooperation should take this reality into account.

We look forward to the day when we can say that the citizens of all our countries are residing in the place of their free choice with an adequate and dignified standard of living.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. José Mandra, Vice-Minister of the Interior of Mozambique.

Mr. Mandra (Mozambique) (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement made by the Minister of Home Affairs of South Africa on behalf of the Group 77 and China.

Migration has now reached unprecedentedly high levels owing to, among other factors, greater access to travel, persistent regional and subregional economic disparities, natural disasters, armed conflicts, political instability and the vulnerability of national borders. Migration is inevitable and unstoppable as long as there is a deep imbalance of development among countries. This should not be viewed as a problem or threat. If well coordinated between countries of origin and destination, it can produce positive effects on the economy and can create jobs and generate profits. In Africa, and in particular in my country, Mozambique, as far as labour is concerned, migration of the work force is a current and historical reality with a direct impact on the economy and society.

The approach to the problem of immigration should bear in mind respect for human rights and dignity, regional and international cooperation and the sharing of responsibilities among countries of origin, transit and destination. The relationship between migration and development cannot be separated. On the one hand, migration enriches the culture and society of host countries, with far-reaching implications for employment and economic growth. On the other hand, however, migration can lead to a brain drain that reduces the active population and qualified work force in the countries of origin.

In addressing the issue of international migration and development, we acknowledge the need to build a broad political consensus concerning the challenges faced by the international community: challenges such as security, organized crime, pressure on resources, development inequalities and imbalances, xenophobia, unemployment and legal differences.

Notwithstanding such issues, as far as the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) is concerned, free movement of persons through the territory of other countries can be an enabling factor in the regional integration process. Free movement of persons is the most visible way in which ordinary citizens benefit from the building of a community of States. Accordingly, we argue for adopting an incremental approach to problems related to migration, through the adoption of policies within the framework of community organizations aimed at regional integration. These policies would include the management and monitoring of migration, migratory labour, forced displacement, national and international security and stability, crisis prevention and management, conflict resolution, and international and regional cooperation.

On the relationship between migration and development, Mozambique subscribes to the priorities established under the African Common Position aimed

at mitigating poverty, which include agriculture and rural development, good governance, harmonization of economic and social policies, improved protection of women, youth, and persons with disabilities, the strengthening of regional, interregional and international cooperation and the promotion of health sector policies.

Recognizing the importance of migration and its consequences for the economic, political, social and cultural life of our continent, Governments took important steps to define a strategic framework for a joint African migration policy. The overall objective of that strategic framework is to encourage African States to integrate migration issues into their national and regional agendas through the development of national migration policies. The framework is intended to address a number of challenges that arise from international migration, including threats to peace and security, mechanisms for the protection of refugees and combating transnational organized crime, development of human resources to mitigate the effects of the brain drain, promotion of regional cooperation and integration, promotion of economic growth and trade through the development of infrastructure and the creation of an environment conducive to the participation of migrants, particularly those in the diasporas, in the development of their countries of origin through the transfer of know-how, savings and remittances.

The President returned to the Chair.

The inputs resulting from this High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development will encourage the mainstreaming of migration into the development strategies of our countries, regions and continents, through the promotion of coherent and coordinated policies.

The President: I call on Mr. Carlos López, Under-Secretary on Migratory Issues, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Ecuador.

Mr. López (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Ecuador fully endorses the statements made by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Rio Group.

Ecuador is one of a small number of countries that is both a country of origin and a country of destination for migrants. In addition, Ecuador receives displaced persons from other countries, a phenomenon that differs from but is complementary to migration, making it the country with the largest number of refugees in Latin America. This has made it necessary to formulate new political policies and massive economic efforts that, without cooperation from the international community — which is still not enough — cannot succeed.

The shared responsibility between countries of origin and countries of destination in the search for solutions on migratory issues must not disregard the role of transit countries. This will also enhance the struggle against illegal trafficking in humans, which involves resources greater than those of drug trafficking, and will help us tackle the corruption that promotes it and the evil effects of human smuggling.

Ecuador, together with Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay and Venezuela signed the Asuncion Declaration (A/61/86, annex) that emanated from the South American Conference on Migration, which enshrined the principle of shared responsibility.

Ecuador has undertaken actions in cooperation with friendly countries, international organizations, civil society and the public sector, such as voluntary return programmes with the cooperation of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the signature of agreements, such as the one signed with Spain to regulate and manage migratory flows. This is a bilateral pilot programme that guarantees secure labour contracts under conditions that are equal for the citizens of both signatories, without intervention of third parties and in accordance with labour-employer norms.

Domestically, the National Plan for Ecuadorians Living Abroad establishes the basis for comprehensively addressing migration issues, in a way that ensures that the State will guarantee the rights of its citizens anywhere in the world and promote their dynamic reintegration into national development efforts. An important experience is the creation of the Working Group on Employment Migration that contributes to the establishment of public policies on migration from the perspective of migrant rights. It includes the participation of civil society, international organizations and public institutions. Furthermore, on 30 August 2006, the President approved the National Plan of Action against kidnapping, illegal trafficking in

migrants, sexual and labour exploitation and other kinds of exploitation and prostitution of women, children and teenagers.

The most vulnerable population — women, children and seniors — faces the destruction of the family environment, suffers the consequences of displacement and the loss of their roots and is susceptible to sexual exploitation, school exclusion and work discrimination. Respect for human rights is the path to the achievement of the Millennium Goals.

One key effect of migration for the Ecuadorian economy is remittances, which have now become our second largest source of income. In that connection, Ecuador has focused its action on reducing the cost of transfers, through agreements signed by the central bank with the participation of a large number of non-official entities, and always taking into account the private nature of those funds. Simultaneously, campaigns to encourage the proper use of remittances in productive projects have been initiated. Due to high migration among developing countries, the question of remittances will become a new area of South-South cooperation.

Migrant associations in receiving countries are focal points to channel the ambitions of citizens living abroad and should become a good mechanism for encouraging intercultural exchange, for adaptation to the environment and for spreading the concept of co-development. That concept should be reflected, essentially, in the transfer of technology from receiving countries to countries of origin and in transfer of the abilities and skills of migrant human resources. Nor must we forget projects that strengthen migrants' ties with their countries of origin through opportunities to invest in their communities.

The principle of sovereignty must not diminish the rights of the migrant, irrespective of their legal status. It should, however, guarantee with tolerance, the peaceful integration of individuals into receiving societies. Regularization of the status of migrants is an objective that benefits both origin and destination countries, as well as migrants themselves, without criminalizing them.

Finally, my country considers that integration programmes should facilitate migration and broaden the concept of the free transit of persons, as well as of goods, services and capital. These are the challenges of this Dialogue: to convert migration into a source of wealth and development and to ensure that migration becomes voluntary, and never forced. In that way, we will meet the expectations that have brought us to this Dialogue, which we hope will continue through the global forum. Here, we thank Belgium for offering to host the forum's first meeting.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable German Espinal, Director-General of Migration of Honduras.

Mr. Espinal (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): Honduras welcomes the convening of this High-level Dialogue. Without doubt, it provides an excellent opportunity to address the phenomenon of migration from a holistic and multifaceted perspective, by identifying and defining the elements of the migration agenda, as well as the necessary follow-up machinery. We also wish to say how pleased we are to see you, Madam, elected as President of the General Assembly; we are confident that your diplomatic experience will ensure the success of our proposed objectives.

Today, 15 September, we celebrate the independence of the Central American countries. That is a very fortunate coincidence. Historically, Honduras has been a country of origin for migrants, but it is also located in a transit region and has been a country of destination, receiving populations that have been displaced for labour reasons — displacement explained by high population density — or that sought refuge during the decade of military-political conflict. Despite our limitations, we Hondurans have been able to share solidarity, friendship and hospitality, often flying in the face of the political agenda of the day.

Honduras considers that an effective strategic migration agenda must include basic components such as: respect for labour-related human rights that safeguard the dignity of migrants, particularly the most vulnerable groups — women and children; combating trafficking in humans and rehabilitating its victims; and ensuring the protection of migrants. We call for a holistic vision, that requires increased international cooperation directed towards developing competitiveness and transforming the backwardness in standards of living. That will result in a better life for the entire population.

At the same time, we must recognize the interconnection among labour markets, which involves the sharing of experiences in order to develop innovative proposals that can promote the mobility of

individuals as part of a controlled, safe and transparent migration which uses duration of residency in the destination country as one of its basic criteria. Honduras also would like to reaffirm the need to reform the programmes of international agencies that are directly or indirectly involved with migration.

Without downplaying the conceptual aspects of migration, we believe that in order to address deteriorating social conditions, increased poverty and growing inequity, Latin American societies are considering alternative models of development. Given growing and justified protest by the impoverished majority, the need for structural reforms to achieve more equitable development becomes more evident each day. Social marginalization, corruption and a lack of jobs and opportunity cause a large part of the emigrant population to travel to developed countries.

This underscores the necessity of embracing the principle of shared responsibility, and of continuously strengthening international cooperation in support of emerging migratory processes that promote integration. We draw support from the political will expressed by our heads of State at various summits, notably at the Panama Summit held earlier this year, and we stress the need for programmes promoting the free movement of persons, goods and services.

The outcomes of such initiatives were first applied in the region that includes Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras. There, the basic elements of a consensus-based migration policy are being adopted, the result of a search for solutions involving Government efforts, civil society participation and support from international and regional-integration organizations.

The Secretary-General of the Central American Integration System (SICA) calls for and supports that coordination. The SICA secretariat offers technical assistance to develop a technological platform encompassing the migration agenda in the region I just mentioned, as well as other important actions.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is contributing by providing technical assistance at all levels. Forums for dialogue and coordination are being activated within the context of the Regional Conference on Migration and the Central American Commission for Migration. In that environment where initiatives are proposed and formulated, the region has the opportunity to promote and consolidate democracy by supporting comprehensive development through reforms aimed at regional stability. Helping ease crises in countries of origin by providing assistance and permitting relief in the form of migrants' remittances leads to policies of solidarity and hence to an effective medium-term solution and matching commitments by Latin American countries and developed countries.

But if this remittance income is no longer received and if additional migrants are barred from entry, the result would be to exacerbate not only the economic crisis, but also the social and political problems in countries of origin, thereby straining the already deficient capacity of our countries to respond to overpopulation.

We believe that tightening measures to curb the flow of migrants would exacerbate the already critical situation in the region and would threaten the viability of structural reforms that can ensure stability. The measures that have been implemented are signs — both concrete and symbolic — of a rejection of migrants, and, as a real threat to the safety and human rights of migrants, they fuel a broad rejection of such policies.

Let me touch on the process of deciding on and formulating foreign policy. Those aspects ought to be taken into account, as the approach here will determine whether Central America forms strategic alliances to achieve development or encounters conflicting approaches involving further obstacles and hostility that would surely worsen the crisis that characterizes international relations.

Honduras enthusiastically welcomes the proposed establishment of a global forum on international migration, involving the United Nations. This would bring together actors in the sphere of migration and promote the sharing of experiences. We reaffirm the need to strengthen complementary efforts of international cooperation and to enhance mutual benefits.

In conclusion, I recall again that Honduras stands ready to participate in and support activities that will contribute to building the institutional and conceptual framework that is necessary for our region, for the United Nations and for the international community in general, and that will lead to effective cooperation.

The President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Belela Herrera, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uruguay.

Ms. Herrera (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank the Secretariat for its work to promote and ensure the success of this High-level Dialogue. Uruguay is firmly committed to its success.

For the Iberian-American countries, the issue of international migration is a priority. It is being addressed as a focal point of the upcoming summit of Ibero-American heads of State, to be held in Montevideo from 3 to 5 November 2006. Uruguay would like to congratulate the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on international migration and development, Mr. Peter Sutherland, for their contribution to ensuring that the issue of migration is included on the world social agenda.

Uruguay entirely agrees with the Secretary-General that this matter concerns all countries, irrespective of whether they are countries of origin or countries of destination. Many countries are both, and migration issues should thus be a matter for close cooperation between countries of origin and of destination to address migration in all its complexity. In view of the global nature of the issue, it must be addressed multilaterally. Accordingly, Uruguay supports the proposed establishment of a standing forum in the United Nations framework to address the complex issues of migration.

We reaffirm the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and believe that a genuine commitment to them by Member States would diminish the inequities and eliminate the more negative aspects of migration. Through co-development, migration should no longer be a flight forward imposed by poverty. Our country believes that full recognition of the individual human and social rights of migrants and their families is fundamental, and emphasizes the need for full implementation by all Member States of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

In our region, the sixth South American Conference on Migration unanimously endorsed the Declaration of Asuncion in March 2006. It emphasizes a set of guiding principles that are essential when considering the topic. In the context of the States members of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR), heads of State agreed to sign the intra-MERCOSUR treaty on free residency, which guarantees the rights and mobility of persons from member States of that regional grouping.

In my own country, we have launched a determined strategy to connect with the more than half million Uruguayan emigrants, who account for 13 per cent of our population. In formulating that strategy, we took into account the valuable contributions made by civil society organizations and academia. Civil society has also played a very important role in providing advice to develop the migration law that will be introduced in the Uruguayan parliament in the coming days.

With regard to nationality and citizenship, we have been working to provide proof of Uruguayan citizenship to nationals abroad in order to facilitate the full regularization of their status in their countries of destination. We are also pursuing the necessary legal channels to enable Uruguayans to vote when abroad, this being one of the core elements of linkage.

On the economic and business front, progress has been made in drawing up important agreements with financial institutions in order to make remittances part of the banking system, thereby reducing their cost. We have also established links with Uruguayan groups in order to encourage them to invest their savings and capital in Uruguay, as well as to promote such efforts more broadly in communities in receiving States.

In addressing the various needs and requests of Uruguayans abroad, we are providing access to health services, housing and insurance, all closely linked to the remittance system that has been developed with our central bank at the centre.

In the area of culture, we are developing a set of programmes and measures aimed at strengthening the cultural identity of Uruguayans abroad. They include distance learning, support and promotion of the Spanish language, cultural products, exhibitions of Uruguayan art and artists in the various Uruguayan communities abroad and, in particular, encouraging travel by highly qualified Uruguayans in academic, artistic and business circles. The aim is to give Uruguayans abroad access to the country's rich heritage without their having necessarily to return.

Lastly, our system of linkages implies a new form of citizen participation in the country of origin while residing elsewhere. To this end, we have sought to organize communities abroad, in order that they may

have places to meet for discussions and suggestions with regard to their own problems or those of Uruguayan society at large. We believe that this approach could be a good way to manage migration while respecting human rights and fostering the participation of migrant groups.

In conclusion, we would like to reaffirm that it is our joint responsibility to ensure that migration results in an enriching cross-cultural experience that ultimately brings about true progress for civilization.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Zvonko Zinrajh, State Secretary and Deputy Minister of Interior of Slovenia.

Mr. Zinrajh (Slovenia): With almost 200 million international migrants in the world — and with trends that indicate that those numbers will grow even further in the future and become more widespread than they are at the moment — Slovenia believes it is necessary to enhance dialogue and cooperation between Governments in order to act in a more coherent way.

We are convinced that special attention must be paid to protecting human rights and guaranteeing security. Those are two essential elements in the area of preventing illegal migratory flows, and in particular in combating trafficking in human beings. In that regard, greater emphasis should be placed on a new concept of human security that shifts the focus from security policies mainly concerned with the protection of State territories to those focused on people, regardless of gender, race, religion, ethnicity, citizenship or other distinguishing characteristics.

When managed effectively, migration can have a substantially positive impact on both the country of destination and the country of origin, as well as on the migrants themselves. We therefore underline the need for a balanced, global, coherent and comprehensive approach that harnesses the benefits of regular migration, develops policies to address irregular migration and includes cooperation with third countries.

One of the most important elements of holistic migration policies is the link between migration and development. In that regard, more consideration should be given both to how migration issues can be integrated into poverty reduction strategies, and other national development strategies of partner countries, and to how donors can support partners' priorities in that context. That would include policy responses to brain drain and an answer to the question on how to maximize the impact of remittances, which remain private funds and should not be seen as a replacement for official development assistance.

Slovenia also recognizes the need for concrete actions in order to deal efficiently with trafficking in human beings, the smuggling of immigrants and other acute problems. It is becoming evident that, while illegal migratory flows and the accompanying criminal activity can be limited by repressive measures and policing operations, they cannot be entirely curbed or prevented in the long term.

Unfortunately, numerous organized criminal gangs take advantage of the hardships of migrants, using them to generate profits, subjecting them to a relationship of slavery and forcing them into criminal activity. People become victims of the greed of others and are often entirely unprotected, in particular the most vulnerable groups, such as women and children. The fight against human trafficking and the smuggling of immigrants is central to eradicating forced and bonded labour, as well as organized crime. Owing to its specific nature and the conscious violation of the basic human rights of the victims, trafficking in human beings in particular is becoming one of the most important challenges at the global level.

Preventing and suppressing human trafficking calls for various measures, including prevention efforts, providing assistance and protection to victims, criminalizing trafficking activities and organizing awareness-raising programmes. Last, and most important, there is a need to eliminate the root causes of trafficking — such as poverty, social alienation and exclusion, discrimination against women and children and the lack of equal opportunities — and to reduce the high demand in destination countries. Important legal instruments have been adopted at the international level intended to prevent human trafficking. However they have not yet been fully implemented everywhere. We call on Member States to speed up the process of ratification of the international instruments concerned in order for the necessary measures to be implemented in practice.

Slovenia welcomes the purposes and goals of the High-level Dialogue in the search for sustainable solutions to real problems, with the aim of improving

the relationship between development benefits and the negative consequences of international migration.

This is a long process, which requires the consistent implementation of measures at the global level. We believe that high-level dialogue can make a significant contribution to enabling the participating countries and organizations to make migration work better for development, promoting cooperation and fresh approaches, thereby enriching the overall discourse on international migration, improving both bilateral and multilateral cooperation, especially within the United Nations, and developing more effective migration policies.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Gagik Yeganian, Vice-Minister for Territorial Administration of Armenia.

Mr. Yeganian (Armenia) (*spoke in Russian*): This High-level Dialogue is in itself proof that the problem of regulating migration processes has long transcended nations and States and even bilateral and regional cooperation. Today, it is truly a global problem. For Armenia, regulating migration is an issue of strategic importance, since, after independence, our country was forced to confront — among other problems — the challenge of an unprecedented number of displaced persons. Armenia experienced every form of migratory flow, including the consequences of the deportation of more than 360,000 refugees from Azerbaijan to Armenia as a result of the conflict in Karabakh, and the immigration of about 1 million people — about one third of the population — from Armenia.

Given the serious problems caused by such large-scale migratory flows, we must examine the relationship between migration and development as it affects both host countries and countries of origin. This is something that Armenia has done. I believe that many representatives in this Hall are well aware of the contribution that the more than 1 million people who constitute the Armenian diaspora make to the countries where they live. According to studies by independent experts, in the Russian Federation alone — which in recent years has received many people from Armenia — Armenian migrants have created more than 1 million jobs.

Furthermore, remittances from migrant workers and Armenians living abroad have had a significant economic impact in terms of the ability of our country to achieve double-digit economic growth for the past four years. For Armenia, the effect of migration on development processes can be directly linked to remittances as a source of investment in our economy. According to information from the Central Bank, individuals inject annually about $1 billion into Armenia's economy. The majority — 76 per cent — of those funds are spent on consumer goods, only 2 per cent is invested in economic activities. We must therefore, as a matter of urgency, use such funds as a source of investment in the economy.

We are taking the very first steps in this area — the issue is on our agenda for cooperation with the International Fund for Agricultural Development. In this regard, we are very interested in establishing dialogue with other countries and international organizations, especially since a number of European Union countries have been conducting similar programmes with success.

Providing assistance to migrant workers to help them to find legal work is one of the objectives of our discussions at this meeting. Many developed countries are routinely meeting their demand for labour through recourse to migrants from developing countries. Such migrants take jobs which are traditionally considered to be unattractive by the local population, but they also work in other areas, including medical services and information technology.

However, legislation relating to migration in developed countries sometimes automatically makes such people illegal immigrants. I believe that it is high time that we found a way to overcome this problem. I would suggest that, as a first step, host countries provide countries of origin with information regarding the demand for work in their labour markets. Specific governmental organizations that help foreign workers could advise on procedures in this area and on related issues. I am deeply convinced that such cooperation could be an effective alternative means of combating illegal migration.

In the context of migration and development, we attach importance to promoting migrant return. We fully agree with the Secretary-General that the major objective of any migration policy must be to provide all those who want to live and work in their home countries the opportunity to do so.

I would like to inform the Assembly that, for the return of Armenian citizen migrants, we have concluded agreements with three European countries.

completed negotiations with five others and are continuing negotiations with another five. Our experience tells us that, in order to avoid the recycling of irregular migrants, it is necessary to add reintegration programmes when we readmit. We are currently conducting such programmes with the Governments of Switzerland and of France. Furthermore, we are planning to set up a centre that will not only give assistance to returning migrants but also provide them with an opportunity, before they return, to go online directly so as to contact the relevant Government organizations in Armenia and to receive information that is of interest to them.

In many countries throughout the world there is a saying to the effect that a good beginning is half the battle. That axiom is applicable to this meeting, too. We see this as the beginning of a long-term path towards dialogue within the United Nations on migration issues. At the same time, ultimate success in this area will, to a large extent, depend on follow-up. The implementation of any recommendations that come out of these meetings will require institutional capacity, and in our view the International Organization for Migration, which has institutional networks throughout the world, could help to reinforce that mission.

The President: I give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Ndiyoi Mutiti, Chief Immigration Officer of Zambia.

Mrs. Mutiti (Zambia): Let me join previous speakers in congratulating you, Madam, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

It is a well-known fact that no country in the world has all the skilled human resources needed to turn the wheels of its economy in both the private and public sectors. This has resulted in the cross-crossing of individuals from one country to another in search of greener pastures. Other movements have been caused by political instability.

In the case of Zambia, there are a lot of Zambians who have left the country to offer their services in other countries. The country has lost doctors, nurses, lecturers and teachers to other countries. That has resulted in disproportionate teacher-pupil, lecturer-student, doctor-nurse-patient ratios, thereby producing a negative impact on a workforce stretched to its limits.

On the other hand, Zambia has to some extent relied on skills from outside the country, particularly in fields such as medicine, engineering and accountancy, to mention just a few. The expatriates in Zambia are made up of those seeking greener pastures or who are part of development assistance. It has been noted that the challenges related to migration and development need to be further assessed and addressed in their specific national context.

Zambia has played host to various refugees fleeing from wars, civil strife and political instability in the region. The Zambian Government has allowed some of the refugees to work and, where possible, run businesses. Furthermore, the Zambian Government has entered into agreements with other countries and international organizations, such as the International Organization for Migration and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to facilitate the repatriation of some refugees once it has become safe for them to return to their countries of origin.

The onus is on Member States to deal with matters of migration in a developmental manner that adds value to economies of scale. However, the measures that should be put in place have to ensure protection of human rights in accordance with adopted international human rights conventions for both migrants and the local communities. Migrants are vulnerable to exploitative processes which include forced labour, discrimination, xenophobia and deplorable living conditions. It is important to enhance partnerships with the International Labour Organization through which basic minimum standards in employment and labour are adopted by most Member States.

As we live in a global economy, we must prioritize those issues of migration which will contribute to the development of our national economies through regional integrated processes. These priorities should recognize the experiences of vulnerable groups such as women, youth and children who are easily exposed to exploitative and abusive acts.

In addition to the economic contribution made to development by migrant workers, there is the question

of cultural and linguistic adaptation, for which instruments need to be developed, thus increasing the social obligations of receiving countries.

The question of remittances as a source of economic development in sending countries should be explored within the framework of poverty reduction policies and direct foreign investment. However, earners should not themselves be pushed in that direction as it is probably better for them to build up their wealth in the host country. Currently, remittances transferred through informal operations or hand-carried are not necessarily captured by reporting systems. Therefore, there is need to bridge the gap between estimates and real figures. It had been thought that households receiving remittances would invest them productively, thus creating new economic opportunities at home. However, studies show that they are being used for consumption.

In addition, migrants are not isolated from pandemics such as natural calamities and HIV/AIDS. National efforts to contain such scourges should also address the plight of migrants, particularly those in employment.

In conclusion, I wish to endorse what other speakers have said about the need for a comprehensive and balanced approach in the implementation of migration policies and delivery of services. All nations must realize the potential of migration as a force for development and ensure the protection of rights of all migrants. It is our hope that the High-level Dialogue will pave the way for further debate on this important issue within a multilateral context. That will enable Member States, civil society and indeed other stakeholders to deliberate, exchange ideas and strengthen international cooperation on all aspects of migration and development.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.